

MAN

Junior

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A DEAD MAN
SAVED HIS
LIFE — page 14

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CARTOONS



Murder of



a Dancer

By S. Alexander Cohen
as told to Michael Dubell

Hired to track down a missing person, I found myself
ket on the trail of a killer.

MY name is Dahl, Walter H. Dahl," the
tanned, handsome young man said, hand-
ing me a business card that identified him as
an officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad. "I
want you to locate someone for me."

That's how it started on that hot summer
morning of August 22nd, 1945, a routine be-
ginning not unlike the dozen-odd missing-
persons cases that drifted into the office of
the Supreme Detective Agency each week. I
pulled out a routine missing-persons form and
looked up into the blank, unwavering blue
eyes of Mr. Dahl. People searching for missing
persons usually evidence some distress—not so
Mr. Dahl.

He described the subject in considerable
detail: Forty years old, dark brown coloring,
five-feet in height, weight 150 pounds, heavy
beard, invariably went bareheaded, wore brown
ties and tan coloured, single-breasted coat.
"His name," he said, watching me for a
response, "is Solon Bert Harger."

"The well-known ballroom dancer?" I asked.
He nodded, then asked me to keep all he told
me in strictest confidence. I assured him I
would. Dahl indicated that his only interest
in the case was his concern for Harger's bro-
ther, dance partner, Charlotte Maye, and that
his end to me was on her behalf.

"Miss Maye says Harger left for Washington
on August 20th at 5:30 a.m.," he said. "They
have a contract to appear at the Baltimore
Hotel. She prefers a private investigator in
order to protect their performance from un-
favourable publicity. After all, Harger is a
well-known personality."

Before he left, Walter Dahl gave me a list
furnished he said, by Charlotte Maye, of
"leads" to the places Harger usually stayed,
plus a return and expense money.

"Harger had been hitting the bottle a little
too much . . ." he explained, noting that he
expected it was nothing more than a binge.
"But," he concluded, seemingly as an after-
thought, when he was half outside the door,
"if you find he has met with some accident,
do nothing before you consult me—nothing,"
he added for emphasis.

Continued on page 66



"Isn't that the missing
dancer I read about?" I
asked as the Army
Captain's wife peered
through the bars.



IN THE SWAMP

JIM SAYERS • FICTION

Steve knew the odds against their living were great, and he realised the escaped convicts didn't want his rifle just to shoot sharks.



I STRAIGHTENED up and wiped the sweat from my eyes, and listened to a burst of voices from the cabin of the launch. My bottle of brandy was gone around, not as medicine. Well, the more they drank the better; it might make them careless.

Gwen's eyes were dark blue in the dim light of the engine room. They met mine, the fear in them made my stomach tighten. She was listening, too. I glanced out at the threatening sky and wished the daylight would fade.

A gust of wind made the launch shudder. Under all the other sounds came the rumble of the surf pounding the mouth of the creek. Any time now the first squall would batter the small island. There would be no chance of making the mainland before the cyclone moved in along the coastline.

All morning I had tried to doctor a sick motor with an eye on the barometer. About noon, I felt the launch shudder with a different movement from the usual swing of wind and tide. I stepped out into the main cabin. Gwen came behind me. Three faces stared over the side. They were ashen, unshaven, and dripping water. There was something hungry in the eyes that met mine, then roved past to Gwen, noting over everything in sight, and coming back to Gwen.

Her blue shorts and shirt emphasized the color of her eyes and the golden tan of arms and legs. Her blonde hair fell in waves to her shoulders, and caught the light when she moved.

The three men climbed aboard. Little pools of water dripped off them.

Neil Arthur

Their clothes were a faded, dirty grey, their feet were bare. They came from Fiji, the big fellow told me. Jules was his name and he was the only one who spoke a little English. The other two used rapid French. Their boat had gone down on the weather side of the island.

We opened our food supply and watched the way they wolfed it down. Then I went back into the engine room, and Gwen went with me.

That was over four hours ago, and things had happened after that. The two leather straps over my back were empty now. The J33 rifle usually hanging there was up in the stern now, big Jules had it. He said he wanted to shoot at sharks when he walked over and pulled it out. Now I knew I was just one against the three of them and he didn't care about sharks.

There was only one place that they could come from, and it wasn't Fiji. It was the Pearl Settlement at New Caledonia, a thousand miles East. A thousand miles in an open boat, with little water and not much food, was awesomely it would be a poor worth bearing, and worth passing on, only I wasn't going to pass it on; not from what I'd heard.

It was lucky that when Jules fired his first burst of French at me I just stood there and shook my head. As odd word here and there made sense because I'd learnt French, but that was at school, a long time ago. After that anything Jules said to me was in English, and the others talked freely in French. I couldn't understand much they thought I couldn't understand anything.

I was busy on the engine, listening to the talk from the main cabin. A sentence suddenly straightened me up. They were discussing out there what they'd do with me, with the boat, and with Gwen. That much I now understood.

In spite of the warmth of the engine room, a cold sweat oozed out all over me. As soon as I got the engine running again, they were putting me overboard with my hands tied and a rope round my ankles. A real drowning job.

I tried to calculate our chances. They were three against one, and they had the rifle. The small island had only one possible hiding place, the mangrove swamp farther along the coast.

The padding sound of bare feet warmed of Jules stepping into the room. His dark eyes flicked at Gwen before he turned on me. His figure bulked largely in the small space.

"That engine, she fix?" he queried. I shook my head slowly, watching his disappointment. I gave him a lot of technical stuff about ignition failure, and he talked, saying nothing. He went out and told the others, and I waited for their reaction. It came in a rapid burst that made me realize how big was the ground we stood on. They were impatient men.

Why wait, they asked. They could take the girl now. What about the

engine, Jules asked. Could they fix that? Did they want to swim to the mainland? In a few more hours it would be all right.

Only this morning Gwen had refused to return to the mainland with my partner and his wife on another launch.

"A wife's place is with her husband," she had jokingly said. "I'll stay with Steve."

There was only one chance, play

The Four Brothers

TOM, Dick, Harry and George are brothers. They belong to four different professions. One of them (not Tom) is a solicitor. One (not George) is a schoolmaster. One is an architect and the remaining brother is a doctor. All of them dislike business.

The other day I was discussing golf with the architect. "My schoolmaster brother plays a good game," he said. "He can give Tom a stroke a hole, and Tom is a better player than Dick." Who is the solicitor?

ANSWER

Here are the possibilities set out in a table:

Dick	a.	d.	str.	sch.
Harry	a.	d.	str.	sch.
George	a.	d.	str.	—
Tom	a.	d.	—	sch.

But we learn from the conversation with the architect that Tom is neither solicitor nor schoolmaster. Tom therefore is the doctor. But Dick also (as is evident from the same conversation) is neither schoolmaster nor architect; hence, since Tom is the doctor, Dick is the solicitor.

dark, hid them along until nightfall, then, over the side, with darkness to hide in.

I stepped over and took Gwen in my arms.

"Serve, I'm scared. Those men out there—the way they look at me, they frighten me."

She buried her head against my shoulder. The glory and fragrance of her hair was all about me as I held her close. I could feel the frightened pulse of her heart. I whispered softly into her hair.

"Listen. When it gets dark, we'll go out together. Wait for me, don't go out on your own. Move around carefully. When I yell, 'Right' jump up on deck and dive overboard. Make

for the left bank and I'll be right behind you. O.K.?"

She nodded and lifted her head. Her eyes were dark, but some of the fear had gone. I wondered if she guessed just how bad things were.

Before dark the rain started, light stuff with plenty of wind behind it. The barometer fell steadily. The muzzled rumble of the surf seemed louder. The time dragged, and slowly the tension built up; you could feel it. Jules kept coming to enquire about the engine, and I promised it would be ready, perhaps, some time after tea.

Every muscle seemed tight as a violin string. I followed Gwen out into the main cabin, and things moved suddenly. The fair one called Pierre suddenly slipped his arms around Gwen as she went to pass him to the narrow space. She turned her head, and I saw the mute appeal and terror in her eyes. Jules gave a sudden warning in rapid French.

Pierre answered, ignoring me altogether. "I'm tired of waiting. Why worry about him?"

Anger exploded inside me. I stepped close in to him, and drove the edge of my hand behind his ear. His legs sagged and Gwen tensed for me.

"Right!" I yelled. As Pierre still I drove my bare foot under his chin with all the power I could muster, and whirled towards Jules. He stood between us and the steps, and made a grab at Gwen. I hit him low. His head jerked forward, and I hit up under his chin with everything I had. He staggered sideways over a bunk.

I followed Gwen up the steps. The third man, Jacques, came to life. The rifle was too far away for him to grab.

It was nearly dark and the night was misty with rain. The water was warmer than the air. The tide was rising strongly, and would help us. I spotted Gwen's head early. It showed too plainly for comfort. The water seemed alive with life of all sorts. Something whirled and splashed alongside me, and I jerked away.

The mangrove fringe we were swimming for was a vague blur on our left. I swam frantically to close the gap between us. When I reached Gwen she was breasting water. I glanced back towards the launch, and saw a torch flicker. The beam swung my from side to side over the water, weak and useless.

"Take a breath and dive for the mangroves. They might start shooting," I gasped.

Gwen's head disappeared. As I went under the strong pull of the tide caught me. I swam until I felt dead under my fingers, and came up gasping, looking for Gwen. Something screamed off the water beside me (was the mangrove), and the report came thly down the wind. There was no blondo hand against the dark background. A flutter of panic shook me. Was an old man crocodile or gopher on the prow? The mouth



"Well, you certainly proved one thing tonight, Mateolas.
Ten shillings doesn't go for th, so days."

of tidal creeks were favours with them.

"Gwen, Gwen, where are you?" The wind flung my voice away. Another bullet hit the water and whined away.

"Save! Here I am."

I grabbed an overhanging branch and tried to locate the voice. A splash, and Gwen was beside me, her hair a floating halo on the dark water. My arm went around her. From now on we stayed together.

I tried to locate the small beach I remembered. From down wind came

softly towards the creek, shimmering over rocks and holes in the mud. The torch flared a score of yards away. It was pouring inland, and I heard Gwen catch her breath. We stopped, and I gave her hand a reassuring squeeze.

An argument developed amongst the Freshwaters. Somebody wanted to leave the search until daylight; but Julie's snarling voice overrode the objection.

Footsteps crunched away over the ridge, leaving the glow of a cigarette to show the boat was guarded. I

over it was kept moving up and down a short distance from the boat.

I crouched on one knee, watching the red spark wax and wane as its owner peered towards me. I came to full draw and loosed as the red glow passed before turning. The sudden scream that tore the night brought an echo from further along the ridge.

I lugged at the anchor, lifted it, and dropped it into the boat. Gwen was beside me whispering questions that would have to wait. I gave her the bow and pushed off, rowing desperately to give the shadow of the mangroves before the pounding feet reached the man I'd hit. Behind us the flash and crack of the rifle; the bullet whined away over the creek, and another followed before the creek closed in on us from both sides.

I rested on the oars and let the current carry us along, telling Gwen exactly what had happened. She didn't comment. She reached over and her hand closed on mine. I knew then that she'd know, though she hadn't said, just how grim things were. Drifting in the boat, I pondered our past move. I wanted to regain the beach. If I ignited the motor pins now in my pocket, and got the engine running, we were still prisoners in the creek while the surf was rising. Even if they didn't come aboard again under cover of darkness, they could still shoot holes in the hull. It might be better to keep to the open.

The rain came again, driving before heavy gusts of wind. Huddled in the boat, we listened to the roar of wind and water, and watched the tide to prevent being stranded. The men kept the machines and mosquitoes away.

Daybreak would bring low water, and trouble. Julie could not afford to leave us behind as witnesses. We left the boat before daylight proper, and found a spot which suited our plan of campsite.

A mangrove swamp is a eerie place even in daylight. The water and mud are full of strange flops and gurgles, life of all sorts abounds and everything lives on something else. Bubbles of gas rise out of the mud; the stench is sickening.

There was a sudden sound of soft voices, and then silence. I dipped the bowing out of my shirt and braced the bow. Placing one shaft on the string, I stuck another one upright in the mud in front of me.

My heart began a muffled thump, snowwater trickled into my eyes, the bow became slippery.

The silence began to worry me. It was only a small swamp. They could have found a way around behind us. They might realize that a bow could be dangerous, with visibility down to a few yards in many places.

The voices came again, much closer. I tensed, arrow on string, ris in the leaves above my head. Spitting, squelching sounds, a muted curse. Behind me Gwen took a deep breath. I saw a blur of grey through an opening.

How To Stop Smoking

ONE of the easiest methods for a person to ease himself of cigarette smoking is to learn to breath properly, according to a professor of psychology at Stanford University, United States.

Heavy smokers are inclined to take short breaths when they haven't got a cigarette in their mouths, he says, and this results in breathlessness and pressure on the chest. This, in turn causes in many people an unconscious and anxiety which makes them want another cigarette.

Five-minute breathing exercises carried out 16 times a day for a month had enabled a trial group of heavy smokers to stop smoking without much trouble. The group of 15 persons had been smoking in excess of 50 cigarettes a day and the exercises consisted of taking deep breaths in and out 16 times a minute.

a sound like guns squeaking in rowlocks. I pushed Gwen ahead. We had to find a way out of the creek; there was too much wild life around for comfort. I couldn't touch bottom. We might be over a big hole, and anything might live in it. Shouts came from down wind, and the splash of oars. We turned towards a white blur, gritty clods and was today our feet. We staggered ashore and threw ourselves on the sand, breathing great gulps of air and feeling the wind cold on our bodies. The rain had stopped.

It was a small beach all right. After we had caught our breath we moved inland, forced our way through a screen of mangroves, and came out on a sand ridge. Standing there, listening the roar of the surf came plainly, a background to other noises. Splashes from the creek, and wind in the trees all around. Voices were close, the sudden splash of oars as they turned the boat towards the beach.

I fought down an urge to plunge away over the ridge. I remembered the torch, and how we'd show up against the sand. There was the rifle to think of. The creek was the last place they'd expect us to be. We ought to get back there, if they got careless, we might even get the boat.

I took Gwen's hand and led her

washed the cigarette glow, bright and fade.

I led the way back to the water. We crouched and crept, forcing our way through the mangroves. The water was warm and black, and we floated silently around the corner. The stern of the boat loomed above us, and we grounded beside it. The pistol marched the sand ten yards away. I whispered in Gwen's ear to stay put, and then began to pull the anchor rope up the beach.

The idea, when it came, stopped me. I lay on the wet sand, one hand on the rope, thinking hard. In the boat was a wooden bow, half a dozen fish arrows, and 30 yards of line. I used arrows for shooting fish, sting-rays, small sharks and the like. How would the arrows go on a human target? The thought of driving a barbed fish arrow into human flesh was repulsive. But what would Gwen and I get, being hustled up a small creek by three men, one with a rifle? This was the chance to reduce the odds by one-third.

I felt over the gunwale and located the bow and arrows, and detached the fishing line normally linking the arrow to the bow.

I began to stalk the red glow of the cigarette tip and scarcely breathed as I crept, crouching in the dark. Who-

LEOPARD-TOOTH (1957) 141

Size 36 Bust 34





When the native priest called down

a powerful curse

Vengeance of the Shark God

WILMON MENARD • FACT



on *The Ghoul* he knew that the great white shark would exact a terrible retribution.

I HEARD of the death of Professor Pierre Villiers while waiting in Papeete, Tahiti, for the inter-island schooner to take me to my new trading-post on the coast of Tuvalu in the Tuamotu or Dangerous Islands. The details were meagre. The French courier had been struck down in the village of Matutu, Teheia Island, far south of Tahiti.

Villiers was sitting at a table on his semide verandah, inspecting by lamp-light some of the small stone idols he had found on the nearby (isle of Kuraita, when the killer crept stealthily up the beach, climbed noiselessly over the verandah railing and flung up behind him to deliver the deadly strike.

Although Villiers did not die immediately and had lucid moments until he expired of multiple skull fractures before dawn, he could not identify his attacker. He had heard a slight movement behind him a second before

something crashed down on his skull, but was unable to whirl to get a look at the man.

Villiers' money, watch, ring and priceless collection of Polynesian antiquities had been stolen. His collection was the result of a two-year scientific voyage among the islands of Eastern Polynesia. Several natives of Teheia and adjoining islands were questioned by the local authorities, but all could furnish definite proof of their whereabouts at the hour of the murder.

For the most part, the villagers, whose minds are still influenced by superstition, were steadfast in their belief that the tragic French professor had been punished by one of their many evil demons of the darkness, because he had desecrated sacred places to gather his articles of Polynesian lore. But it was apparent that something more tangible than a vengeful ghoul had attacked Villiers.

I am positive that if his death had taken place in a modern city of America or Europe the murderer would have been in custody within 24 hours.

He had left behind a trail a mile wide. There were many small clues, any one of which a modern criminologist could have used to trap the killer.

The death instrument, a heavy bar of iron, was found on the beach, covered with fresh imprints of the murderer's hand. His footprints of men were found in the soft earth below the verandah.

Communication is difficult in the islands without wireless, the only means of transportation and transmission of messages being by slow island schooners that are dependent upon the fickle winds and their customary defensive auxiliary engines to reach island ports. By the time word could be received in Tahiti, the central isle

of administration of French Oceania, the remainder could be thousands of miles away, and all clues obliterated.

I had been sincerely shocked to hear of Villers' death. I had met him in Tar O Hae, Nukunono, of the Marquis Group, a year before. He was a pleasant-faced Frenchman and it was hard to believe that someone could hate him enough to commit murder.

He had come to the Marquesas aboard a Messageries Maritimees steamer on its way back to Marseilles, France, to study Marquesan ethnology and to collect some relics of the ancient moos.

I had quartered him in the trading store, and was well repaid by the courtesy through his entertaining con-

stant skipper of the schooner *Mamutu* was very long in the face. "It is a cursed island," he said gloomily.

We were standing in the bow, shading our eyes to sight better the low coral atoll which we were fast approaching. "The natives believe in ghosts and death-curses, and they have a big white shark as their god," he added, with a volcanic shake of his head.

I found within a week that the natives of Turea were, far from the very general opinion had it, an industrious and proud race. At the end of three months I had a large consignment of copra and pearl shell for the trading company and it was rare to surprise and impress them. Al-

though the lagoon and anchored off the coral strand. It was the *Venusa*, on her way back to Tahiti from the Gambier Islands. When the schooner left at noon the next day, I was the unwilling host to the ugly manner, The "Ghoul." His real name was Taro Maheva.

I apply the word monster to the man because it describes appropriately his physical and mental characteristics. Never had I been compelled to look upon a countenance so startlingly sinister and lacking in human expression as the one that faced me across the table at meal-time. His native and white blood had doubtfully failed to produce the most objectionable type of half-caste Polynesian.

The Tureans, quick to apply a descriptive name to a newcomer, called him "Uro-tutu," or "Dog-man."

The skipper of the schooner had told me sufficient about his presence here in Dangerous lagoon to convince me that he was up to no good. In some of the stools, he had stolen tape-covered mummies of the progeny of the Tuamotuan ruler, TU. He ruthlessly invaded sacred, cord-line stone Moara (temples), dragging out interred members of the ancient royalty and leaving quickly before the natives were aware of the great sacrilege.

Two weeks after the Ghoul had arrived on the atoll, I was strolling along the beach in front of the native village, when Roroatua, the island chief, stuck his head from the door of his hut and hailed me. Maheva, the high priest, was in conference with him, and when I entered his palm-leaf structure I could see by the expressions on their faces that they had been discussing a subject of grave importance.

"Good friend, we wish to talk with you about the Dog-man," the chief began in a solemn voice. "The Turean sailors on the schooner told my people what this man has been doing on other atolls of the Tuamotus. Now, my people tell me that they have seen him starching among the sealed crypts of our dead. They have asked Maheva and myself to have you speak with this wicked man and warn him not to attempt such shameful acts on Turea."

"Last night," interrupted Maheva in his high-pitched, quivering voice, "in my apo-vana (sacred, copper-bowl of sacred sea-water) I saw the face of this Uro-tutu, and it was like that of the Ananaitia (vampire-demon). Oh, Good Friend, there is the edge of the papara (dead) about him! Cast him out as you would a leprous person!"

The Ghoul remained in the late afternoon of that day from his customary tour of the atoll. He was lumbering up the steps of the trading-store, when I hurried out of the copra-warehouse and intercepted him.

"The people here are a little upset about your prowling around in their sacred burial grounds," I said quietly.

The Ghoul had none of the superstitious characteristic of the Poly-

4,000 Years Old And Still Growing

GREATEST circumference of any known tree belongs to a chestnut on the island of Sicily. Scared by fire but still living, the great girth of this tree that has survived earthquakes and disaster since the days of the Romans and Phoenicians is 196 feet. Although its age has not been ascertained, experts say it must be nearly as ancient as some of the great sequoias of America. One colossal sequoia is tabbed with 4,000 years behind it. It is known as the General Sherman, with a girth of over 100 feet and a height of 275 feet. It towers almost without taper to the first branch, which is seven feet in diameter. General Sherman is still full of vitality and continues to grow.

The leafiest sequoia or redwood now living and the leafiest of all the world's known trees, is the Fremont's Tree. It towers 364 feet in the Humboldt State National Park of California. Its girth is 47 feet.

Giant redwood, just seem to keep growing unless destroyed by fire or lightning. If they could be protected from these factors, some of these titanic trees would defy the ravages of time for 10,000 years.

pany. He had a brilliant mind and a ready wit. He was financing his scientific trip through the islands of French Oceania, for the sole purpose of making a collection of little-known Polynesian antiquities. He showed me some of these articles. He had more than paid for his trip to the islands with just one of the pieces.

When my schooner arrived in Papeete to take me to Turea Atoll, the excitement over Villers' murder had abated. As it was, the news was two months old before reaching Tahiti. Apart from casual reference by some old residents of the islands and the comments by the natives that the currier had been struck down by an evil demon, the incident was forgotten.

Little did I realize that evening when the palms of the atoll of Turea rose out of the blue South Pacific that this small coral island was to be no other thing of violence and death. My mind was occupied only with plans for getting the trading-post in shape, and how I would be received by the primitive Tureans. The half-

though at first I had been received respectfully and coldly by the Tureans I gradually won them over.

Their Great White Shark, to whom, at the slightest provocation, they chanted and drummed on tom-toms so enthusiastically, I imagined to be only the appropriate symbol of worship by a sturdy race who had lived for centuries close to the sea, and, as keen students of marine life, had naturally selected one of the most voracious monsters of the ocean—the Carcharodon lillo-shark. Although most of their communal life revolved around the great stone shark god in the marae, or temple, in the centre of the village, I never expected to see its living prototype. I am quite sure I never would have, if The Ghoul hadn't come to Turea.

The "Ghoul" I had known before coming to Turea. I remembered him as a loafer and a drunkard of the Papeeteia saloon. He was a half-caste and had scraggly acquired all the worst traits of both the white man and the native.

One morning a schooner came into



"Malnutrition? How long has he been here?"



"I've lost over five pounds."

business. He had, in his youth, shipped as a seaman aboard a tramp-steamer. He had lived in the waterfront districts of world-wide ports, acquiring all the sordid evils of these vicious slums.

"Tell them to go to the devil!" he muttered.

In a sharp voice, I said: "I'll have to ask you not to violate any of the strict laws of these people. The natives hold me responsible for your behavior on this soil, and as their friend and helper I have a double-fold reason for insisting that you don't desecrate any of the burial crypts on Tureen."

"I'm not looking for any skeletons buried on this soil!" he yelled wrathfully, pushing his abhorrent face close to mine. "I happen to know there are some underwater caves on the inner side of the coral reef here where the natives have for centuries hidden their dead. I don't think they'd care if I took a few old seamen."

I shook my head. "You know as well as I that Tureen happens to be one spot of the Dangerous Archipelago that has never been described by its original people in the copes and pearl-shell magazines. Any intrusion on or under Tureen is the ancestor of one of several of the big hundred natives living here to-day."

"My scattered thread in Tahiti is proving me well to being him back some good skeletons," the Ghoul said. "And I need the money," he added with sullen finality.

That same day at sunset I was taking a walk along the beach when the Ghoul came out of the store and hurried down the coral strand toward me.

"Look here, now, Mestard," he said, "I'm willing to split the money I'll get for mummies if you'll find out where they are. What do you say?"

I gave him a cold, steady look.

"You're not taking any account dead from Tureen," I said coldly. "And whether you like it or not you're leaving that soil on the next schooner, it'll be here in about ten days."

"Little too good here, huh?" The Ghoul sneered. "Well, I'll find those skeletons myself!"

"I wouldn't be too sure about that," I said.

The Ghoul was working against time because he knew the schooner always came at its scheduled time. He was up at the crack of dawn, scouring the reefs and lagoons until dark. Returning to the store in the middle, he drank heavily. With savage curses he stormed about in his room, occasionally crashing his huge fist against the wall in unbridled violence and frustration.

When I was working over my copra accounts one night the Ghoul came out of his room. He moved across to the chair in front of me and sat down heavily. I felt his blood-shot eyes watching me closely, but I did not look at him to acknowledge his presence.

"I'm willing to give you some cash in advance if you'll help me get some skeletons," he said in a friendly voice. "There's not enough money in the world to buy all the natives' reverence for their ancestors or their friendship with me," I replied calmly.

"Oh, to hell with them! Once I'm away from here with a skeleton or two they'll forget all about it!"

"You're quite wrong there," I corrected him. "They'd hold me to blame for any violations you made against their honored dead!"

"Come on, how much do you want?" he yelled. "You're a trader and you've got a price!"

"As a trader with a conscience I can only say, Damn you! Now clear out of here! I'm busy!"

I gave my attention to the ledger again. A few seconds later, a proclamation of danger caused me to miss my copy suddenly. The Ghoul was still opposite me but now, as I stared at him, he began to rise slowly out of the chair. In his right hand was a rim-bottle which he no doubt intended to use as a bludgeon.

"You'd better put that down," I reminded calmly. "If you don't want to feel a fish-spear bury itself in your back!" I glanced toward the verandah where my assistant Mope was loitering on the doorway. A long, barked howl came from his room, meaning:

The Ghoul turned slowly around, now the violent Mope and then glanced down at me in helpless fury. He was breathing heavily and the thick cords of his neck were throbbing violently as he restrained himself with great effort. Then, without looking at me or Mope again, he barged the bottle down and on the table and shuffled into his room, muttering:

"You possibly wonder why I permitted such a dangerous man to share my quarters. My only reason was that I did not particularly care to have anyone slaughtered on an island where I traded."

I knew that if I insisted he move into a native hut somewhere along the beach, the Tureans would lose no time in disgusting him as he slept. I realized that his murder would call for a lengthy investigation by the authorities. It would eventually result in a severe fine for the native village and severe punishment for those who carried out the deed. This I wanted to spare the kindly natives of Tureen. I was determined against all odds to protect them against the reflection of penalties which such an act would entail, justified though it was. While he was under my roof as a native, by strict tribal custom, would molest him physically, unless in defense of their own life or mine.

The demeanor of the Tureans toward the Ghoul a month had slowly altered. It was an unthoughty change. They no longer laughed, sang or clapped while making copra or diving for pearl shell. Their usually cheerful conversations had now become stern and unrelenting. As the long South Pacific days and nights passed torpidly, The Ghoul's presence on the soil had

became more and more like an ordinary passenger.

If the schooner had arrived at its expected time it would have averted the ghastly accident which occurred during the five days it was delayed at Pukerua Anui, where its ruler was being retained.

The Ghoul had softly packed his belongings and was occupied in looting Tama's empty-handed. He knew if he showed any reluctance in departing, there were many lucky sailors who would delight in the privilege of tossing him bodily aboard the schooner. The day the trading-boat was scheduled to arrive he made one last effort to obtain a mummy. He tried to bribe a pearl diver, but the outraged Tautau angrily pushed him into the lagoon.

When the day passed without a sign of the schooner The Ghoul pined at sea.

"Wouldn't it be funny if that schooner has hit a reef and sunk? Then I'd have plenty of time to look for skeletons, wouldn't I?"

"If that has happened, you'll have to navigate a sailing canoe back to Tahiti," I advised him. "I'm giving you just one week longer on this stall, schooner or no schooner."

The Ghoul spent more time in his frenzied hunt for mummies knowing full well that he was now working against precious time. I didn't think he would be successful. But I was wrong.

Late in the afternoon of the fifth day, while I was impatiently awaiting the schooner's arrival, I suddenly heard The Ghoul running fast in the grove beyond the trading-room. He stumbled violently coming up the verandah steps. When he came through the store he was lumbering unsteadily as if finishing a grueling race.

He paused briefly with a sluggish movement when he came abreast my desk. He was gasping spasmodically. He gave me a wild, ferocious glare, then he sagged on, gibbering. But there was something dangling from his right hand. A sudden leap of sick, filled with bulky objects, which at the jarring impact of his heavy footfalls gave forth hollow, rattling sounds!

"What have you got there?" I yelled, rising and hurrying around to bar his way.

But before I could reach him he had leaped into his room and slammed the door, bolting it.

I lost no time in going down to see Maskeva and Ranzala. While trotting through the native village to the witch-doctor's dwelling, I saw that the natives were squinting silently before their huts, and they retained my hurried greetings with stolid nods. I found the witch-doctor and Ranzala in the Maew-tahaua (Temple of Sorcery). When I rushed excitedly in, Ranzala halted my rush of words with a stern gesture of his hand.

"Save your futile words," he said

quietly. "We know that the 'Dog-Man' has found the mummy and his stolen one of my ancestors."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"There is very little we can do now," the chieftain replied sadly. "Unfortunately, he has sanctuary in your house. Under ancient law we cannot violate that upon. If you were not our good friend we would visit him immediately and put him to death."

"The Great Shark God, Hamaika, will punish him for his crimes," Maskeva cried, clenching on his shrunken chest with his bony fists. "Look! Even now I prepare the *afia* (sacred) for the 'Dog-Man.'"

The *afia* was the scurrying insect which witch-doctors of the tribe have practiced for centuries against their enemies.

Maskeva reached over with his two hands and removed the stone cover of the huge coral bowl that was buried in the black coral sand in front of him. It was the furnace, or holder-of-an-accursed person's possessions, and scattered in the smooth bottom I saw a wisp of black hair, a nail prying, a piece of damruo-dust, a cigarette butt and leavings of food. He was in the act of replacing the cover when his blood-suffused eyes darted over my shoulder and fixed themselves on an object behind me.

"The White Shark God has answered!" he whispered fiercely. "He will come to Tautau."

Continued on page 40



"For the last time, 'No you can't go out and play cards with the boys!'"

She threw me a lops measure "Check for yourself, Mr. Bartol!" She stepped towards me, raised her arms, and breathed in slightly.



Is that you, Nina?...

By PETER WILLIAMS • FICTION

Vital statistics are fascinating—especially statistics about dances on the hoof!

"Thirty-seven, twenty-four, thirty-six . . ." I murmured softly to myself as I put the letter down. "No wonder Nina Spencer thinks she should be a prospect for front line chorus."

The letter was from Bill Downey, an investigator in the South. He had an assignment to locate Nina Spencer, aged twenty-three, near enough to a brownie, who hoped to make the big-time on the stage.

"Apparently," Bill Downey had written, "she has the idea she looks good in black mesh stockings. Her folks haven't heard from her for about a month. She is, or was, headed for an engagement at the Matador nightclub. Check for me, send me the details and the bill, and I'll take it off what you owe me for the job I did for you last year."

The postscript to the letter said Bill would send a photo of Nina Spencer as soon as he could.

"Thirty-seven, twenty-four, thirty-six . . ." Was to wear black mesh stockings . . .

I memorised it. I visualised it!

A telephone call to the Matador might clear up the enquiry, but there were times when I felt an urge to be

conversational about my work. The figures in the letter suggested a certain silliness.

I was half-way to the door when somebody knocked. I tossed my hat back on the peg, and opened the door.

"Mr. Ray Norton?" he asked.

He was about sixty, well-dressed, cold-eyed. The man just behind him looked slightly younger, and gave me the same impression of cold, impersonal efficiency.

"Please come in," I said.

They came in. I fixed chairs, arranged a few papers neatly, and waited.

The older man spoke. "I understand you are the only full-time private investigator in town."

"Yes, that is so, Mr . . ."

"My name is David C. Johnson. This is Mr. Neville Timbrell. I am from the Permanent Trustee Company, and Mr. Timbrell represents certain large charitable organizations. We have a problem. We hope you can help us."

"I'll certainly consider what I can do for you, Mr. Johnson."

"It's only a matter of fees, Mr. Norton. I don't think you'll have to worry."

I doodled idly with a pencil, an exercise that would have fascinated Freud.

"Normally, Mr. Johnson, my fees are five pounds a day, plus expenses. It depends on the job whether they are higher than that."

He nodded, and began to talk. I stopped doodling. Brother! This was big!

"A few days ago," he began, "there were newspaper reports about the drowning of a Miss Linda Blake."

"I remember," I said. "She was going to inherit a lot of money from her uncle's estate . . . old man Welles?"

Elmer F. Welles was one of the state's richest men, and his fortune's death had been news.

"Under certain circumstances, Miss Blake would have inherited more than a quarter of a million pounds in one year's time—when she reached the age of thirty," Johnson said.

"I read about it. Welles believed young people couldn't handle money, and made the proviso that she could not get the money until she had—as he put it—reached a suitable age."

There were a million reasons why Nina disappeared on her way to the front line chorus in the Big Smoke—reasons that were crisp, oblique and very negotiable.

"My company has the task of administering the late Mr. Welles' estate. He will provide that if Miss Blake is, or was, involved in any scandal, the company can at its discretion hand over the money to certain charitable organizations. Instead of to Miss Linda Blake," the waiter said.

I nodded slowly. "And that's why Mr. Timbrell is here? You think she may have been involved in some scandal?"

"I'm not saying that, Mr. Norton."

"But Miss Linda Blake is dead? What happens to the money?"

"She made a will, leaving her assets to the man she intended to marry, Lionel K. Marcus. My company thinks—after our legal representatives have studied the late Mr. Welles' will—no should pay the money to Mr. Marcus. But a certain development has aroused some thought."

He swept trailed away, but Mr. Neville P. Timbrell leaned forward.

"Mr. Norton, I can say that the charitable organizations I represent are interested in this will naturally enough. The money now either goes to Mr. Marcus, or to charity. You will recall, perhaps, that Miss Blake had been boasting with Mr. Luke Tallento, and, if you will permit me to say so, Mr. Tallento isn't entirely accepted in our community."

Luke Tallento not accepted in the community? That depended on which section of the community you meant. Luke Tallento was an art collector, but nobody had ever pinned a rap on him. He was smart, for sure, and was probably wired into connections where they mattered most.

I remember the news, Miss Blake had been in Luke Tallento's pleasure cruiser. A storm sprang up, and the boat sank. Tallento was picked up by a fishing boat. The girl's body was later washed ashore. The clothes remaining on the body were identified as clothes made for Miss Blake. And Marcus had identified an inscribed wristlet watch, found on the body, as a gift he had given Miss Blake. The body itself had been in fairly bad shape.

"What about the police?" I asked.

Timbrell said, "The commissioner is a friend of mine—and, of course, of Mr. Johnson's. He has checked the reports of his investigating officers. The reports do not suggest there is anything wrong."

There was a pause. I summed up: "So Miss Blake is friendly with Luke Tallento, who is thought to be a racketeer, although nothing has been proved against him. She is engaged to Lionel Marcus, who is a city treasurer, and favoured by her will. She is drowned, and so her inheritance goes to Marcus. Do you think Tallento and Marcus, between them, planned to murder Miss Blake?"

"We don't know," Johnson said slowly. "Tallento was lucky to get out of the boating tragedy alive. He was nearly dead when they rescued him."

"I told it then, gentlemen. I said, 'What you want me to find out if there was any scandal associated with Miss Blake's life . . . no, at least, why and how she was mixed up with Luke Tallento.'"

"That is so, Mr. Norton." When my visitors had gone, I lit a cigarette and poured myself a drink. I needed a drink. Luke Tallento was tough. Luke Tallento also owned the Mandor Nightclub, where the missing Nina Spencer was reported to be working.

I went over the angles. Nina Spencer arrived in town to work for Luke Tallento, and now was thought to be missing. Linda Blake, heiress, went boating with Luke . . . and was drowned.

I could have been wrong, but it looked as if it were bad luck for a girl to get mixed up with Luke.

I dialed Wally Kent's number. Perhaps Wally, columnist for "The Citizen," might know a thing or two . . .

"Linda," he said, "boy, she was the goods. About twenty-one, filled out a lashing outfit the way guys like 'em filled out. She'd been a blonde, a red-head, a brunette . . . you know, some dames . . ."

"How come she had anything to do with Luke Tallento?"

"I've seen her round gambling joints, and Luke has an interest in most rackets in this town, I guess. Maybe they are each other here and there. I'd say she lost pretty heavily, when she gambled."

"Ever heard of Nina Spencer, doing an act for Tallento, at the Mandor?"

"Naw! Sure . . . a ruffy dick who does the best for black-much stockings. Blonde kid. Oh, boy!"

"Blonde?" She was described to me as a brunette."

"Nothing is as unstable as the colour of a woman's hair," he said.

"Who would know anything about Nina, Wally . . . that is, apart from Tallento?"

"She didn't stay long at the Mandor, and didn't get around much, either. There's old Mrs. Delaney. She works at a kind of a wardrobe maffress, helping the girls at the Mandor get ready for their act."

I credited the receiver.

Outside I glanced at my watch-watch. It was nearly five. I caught a cab, went round to the Mandor. There was a good chance that Tallento would be there, as preparations for the night would be starting.

A character, who looked like a tap-dancer, looked me over.

He voice had a slight raspy tone. "Ray Norton . . . I'm an investigator."

"Stay here, Norton. Don't move!" I can take a hint as well as most guys. I stood where I was. He used a telephone, then said "Come on."

We went up a carpeted staircase, along a passage. He opened a door and grinned. "Okay, here—here's Norton."

Luke sat at the desk. He looked

about medium height, dark hair, graying at the temples, brushed back. He had a single-branched grey ear that cost more than I earn in a month. An easy telephone gleamed in the blond wood.

He said, "Sit down, Norton. What's it about?"

I sat down opposite him. His soft hands, with measured marks, rested on the edge of the desk. His eyes bored into me. It was my turn to bat.

"I had an inquiry about a dame, Nina Spencer. Her folk are worried about her. She left home . . . hasn't written for some time. An investigator, Bill Downey, found out she headed here, had a job at the Mandor. He asked me to check."

There was a pause—a long one. I fumbled in my pocket, found a cigarette, handed the pack to Tallento, who shook his head.

"Nina Spencer was here, Norton. She was talking about going farther. Then she quit. Do you know what she looks like? You got a photograph?"

"No, just a description. She's round five feet six, built like Jane Russell . . . a brunette."

"That's her, except I didn't like her hair when she arrived. She's now a blonde. Looks better under lights. What here . . . I'll see if I can check . . . for you?"

He quit the office. I wondered why he didn't use the telephone. He came back, and he seemed almost affable, now.

"I think Nina has been slightly ill . . . or something, but it's nothing much. She's still in town, or was, yesterday. Here's her address."

He scribbled a note, "Suite 77a, The Rosham, East Seventy-Third, Red Hill."

It wasn't the most expensive area in town, but it was five times better than where I live.

"Thanks, Mr. Tallento. I'll see her. I'll be able to tell her folks she is okay. By the way, Mr. Tallento," I added, "weren't you nearly drowned the other day. There was something in the papers about it?"

His eyes narrowed. "Go on, Mr. Norton. Are you interested?"

I said, "It was from page, that's all . . . you look okay. It must've been tough."

He nodded, very slowly. "Life can be tough—and very short, Mr. Norton."

There was no friendly warmth in his voice.

"Sure, sure," I muttered. I picked up my hat. "Thank you for your help, Mr. Tallento."

I moved to the door, his eyes following me. The torpedos was waiting just down the passage. He escorted me to the front door. I went home, ate, showered, and went round to the parking lot for my Chev. It was after eight when I arrived at Red Hill and located the Rosham apartments.

I stepped out of the elevator at the seventh floor, found the apartment



"Who? . . . Are you sure you have the right number, Madam?"

and leaned on the banner. I was about to pass again, when the door opened. Her all-the-shoulder thick, black, lump on round the curves. She smiled, tightly, her wide red lips opening just enough to reveal small white teeth.

"I'm looking for Miss Nina Spencer," I started.

"You've come to the right place . . . what do you want?"

The words were slow, the voice hoarse, the slight smile did things to my spine.

"My name is Norton. Your family, they're worried because they haven't heard from you recently."

She nodded slowly and murmured, " . . . of course. Would you come in, please?"

Ever seen a cat at the zoo refuse a fish at feeding time? I went in. The place was comfortable, in an expensive way. I sat on the ivory hide lounge.

"I like a drink, Mr. Norton?"

I nodded. After all, I've got a mouth.

She bent down, near to me, to fix the drinks. I gulped a little, and tried to look away. She handed me the Scotch, sat down, crossed her legs.

"Cheers, Mr. Norton." She raised her glass, drank a little. "Now I guess you can write to whoever wrote to you, and say I'm okay. You're lucky to catch me. I'm leaving town, soon."

I didn't answer. I had the impression her brain was working—fast.

"Any questions, Mr. Norton? I'd like you to be satisfied."

"I'm just trying to check you against the description given to me. Your hair was supposed to be brown."

"Sure . . . I was a brunette. Now, I'm a blonde. Her dye has come to stay . . . in my business, being a blonde helps."

"It was told you were round like feet six inches, and your measurements were thirty-seven, twenty-four, and thirty-one."

Her eyelids flickered a little as she stood up. She went into another room that could have been a bedroom, and came back. She threw me a tape measure.

"Check for yourself, Mr. Norton." She stepped towards me, raised her arms, and brushed in slightly. The frock strained at the seams.

"Ready, Mr. Norton?"

"Hell! A guy has to do his job. I stood up, and stretched the tape-measure round her. I finally made out the figure.

"Okay?" she asked.

"I guess so, unless I've made a mistake."

I checked the other measurements twenty-four, thirty-one. They tallied. I dropped the tape to the carpet.

"Satisfied?" she murmured.

"Not quite . . . I think."

Her lips stretched me. "You are thinking of something, Mr. Norton?"

Nina Spencer was quite a dame. She told me she had quarreled with Luke Tallamo, but had stayed on in

town until she had tied up a job elsewhere. She hoped to check another job any moment, and had her bags just about packed ready to move. She hadn't liked to tell her folks the job at the Matador hadn't lasted . . . and she had just not written home.

It was after midnight when I got back to my flat, struggled into bed, and went to sleep. By nine in the morning I had showered, shaved, had breakfast of hot black coffee and eggs, and was trying to sort things out.

When I had started asking questions about Luke Tallamo and the Matador, she had started kissing me. That was all right, but it seemed to dull my new sense.

I supposed I could send a telegram to Bill Durney, saying I'd located Nina, and that all was well. But if I let the situation drag a little, expenses could increase, and he'd have to take more of the bill I owed him.

That was one angle. But, also, I was seeing red warning lights.

Maybe I'd have better luck talking to Morris than I had waiting to Tallamo. I went over the map again. Willy Kent of "The Chronic" had mentioned a Mrs. Delaney, who helped the girls at the Matador dress for their acts. I could look her up. I checked her address, got the convertible out, and headed round to see Mrs. Delaney.

I told Mrs. Delaney who I was, and said I was inquiring about Miss Nina Spencer.

"Nina? She didn't stay very long," Mrs. Delaney said. In conversation she and Nina went out a couple of times with Mr. Tallamo. That was about all.

"Do you know if she had any friends? Boy friends, for instance?"

"No . . . funny, isn't it? A very attractive girl, too, but I never saw her with any friends. Mr. Tallamo took an interest in her. She mentioned she had been out with him . . . a couple of times she went to his pleasure cruiser. She was very nice to progress in the theater. I think Mr. Tallamo told her he would try and get her engagements in other nightspots, and introductions to theatrical people."

"Was she fond of Mr. Tallamo?"

"I don't think so. She was in a strange city, and he was kind to her."

"Did she drink at all?"

"Drink . . . ? I don't know, for sure, but I don't think so."

I nodded, slowly. When I had been with Nina the previous night she hadn't been reluctant to drink.

"From when you saw of Miss Spencer, would you say she liked men . . . that is . . ." I hesitated slightly. "To be blunt, Mrs. Delaney, do you think she would be, say, inclined to throw herself at a man, especially the first one she saw here?"

"Mr. Norton? It's obvious you have never met Nina. She just wasn't a girl like that. She wasn't shy . . . but she was reserved. I always said Nina Spencer was a very, very nice girl!"

I thought of my meeting the previous night with Nina, and wondered.

"Well, thank you, Mrs. Delaney for your help."

She was still standing on the edge of the veranda as I started the Chevy. I gunned the engine, coasted back the throttle, and cruised down the street. I crossed the next intersection, and from around the corner came a black sedan.

I stopped on the throttle. The Chevy coughed a little, poked up speed. So did the car tailing me. And then the rear driver stopped the throttle down, and the lapped-up car drove alongside. Two men were in the front seat. The one nearest me was holding a pretty concealed automatic. The street peeped across the edge of the window.

He snapped, "Pull up, Norton—or you'll get a blast."

I stopped. The car stopped alongside me. The head with the gun got out. The gun was under his coat. He didn't make any great efforts to conceal it. He hung open the rear door of the Chevy, got in, and muttered, "Start driving, Norton—go where I tell you to drive."

Half an hour later we stopped in a warehouse warehouse area. A few trucks were about, but the drivers weren't interested in a couple of cars that had stopped. The driver opened a warehouse side-door, and led the way in. Once inside, while the sub-machinegun pressed into my spine, he turned and pulled my .38 out of my shoulder holster.

I was shoved into a room.

"Sit on this chair," said the guard with the gun. I sat. I eyed the men over. They were typical muscle-men, but at the moment they were holding an ace-high hand . . . in the shape of the machinegun.

The head who had driven the car left the room, and the guard with the gun turned slightly to move back to an on-guard box.

I sprang . . . pressing on the balls of my feet with every ounce to gain impetus. My hand just touched the barrel of the gun, as he squeezed the trigger. The breath of the slug faded close to my chest. I felt the barrel hot in my left hand. My right chopped with a vicious short right, and he staggered slightly, his grip tightening on the gun.

The door opened, and the other head had a gun in his hand. He saw the fight and fired as I swung the machinegun holder round. He staggered to the slug hole into his back. I released my grip on the gun-barrel and pushed hard as the head at the door jumped forward. The two heads collided heavily, bounding.

I was in some kind of a passage. The building seemed deserted. I reached the end of the passage, and started bounding up the stairs as the slug-bored gear. One hit the wall just above my head, showering me with ancient plaster. My lungs heaved as I tried to increase my speed.



"There's a crumb on your shoulder. Will you brush it off or shall I?"

I heard the thud of steps below, another clag hit the wall as I turned at the landing. The fleeting glimpse downward showed the hood grimaced and with the revolver aimed upward.

The stairs went up again, but along the passage were several doors. I missed the first, and pushed open the next. A rat scurried in a corner.

I moved behind the door. The steps suddenly stilled at the last of the stairs, paused by the first room . . . and there was silence. So the hood was checking on each room.

Thought of ringing the police, but as the instant I was alone—very alone!—to avoid delays.

If I had Talented pulled in for questioning, he'd have his mouthpiece on the job within minutes. What proof could I produce that the trigger-man worked for Talented?

At the moment it was none! It was just on my when I arrived at the office of Lorenz K. Marcus, located in the best professional area. As I opened the door, I nearly bumped into an attractive girl, maybe about nineteen . . . the office type.

"Monsieur Marcus, he might be some time."

"Then, may I talk to you. How long is it since you left France?"

"He . . . only little time. I work with the French occupation forces in Germany. I meet Monsieur Marcus there. He was doing, what you say, he ran the government, was he? He sponsored me as a migrant."

"You like it here?"

"Not, of course. But now, Monsieur Marcus tells me, the French migration quota are filled, and I have to go back to Paris. I eat like that."

"You are fond of Mr. Marcus?"

She didn't seem to mind the question.

"Oh . . . I think, in Germany, yes, but here . . . I don't know."

"I see . . . Miss . . . ?"

"I am Michelle Yvonne Gishard."

I took a stab in the dark.

"Did you know a friend of Mr. Marcus . . . fairly tall . . . ?"

I struggled with my hands to indicate a silhouette the measurements 37-24-36, conjured up in my mind.

She nodded seriously as though my sign-language was normal.

"Oh . . . you mean, Michelle Blake?"

"No . . . the name was Miss Nina Spencer."

"Spencer . . . I hear that name somewhere. Monsieur Marcus he say, not to me . . . telephone, I think. But now girl I talk about, she was dead . . . it was not, worse."

"I understood Mr. Marcus was engaged to Miss Blake?"

Maybe it was a leading question but maybe the French have a feeling for such subjects. She merely shrugged.

"Oh, that is how it is. They met after I met Monsieur Marcus in Europe, and at one time I came to their country."

I struggled with my French and murmured, "Avec le coeur, l'en as une jambe . . ."

She flushed a little. "Oh, as you say, with the heart, one never knows . . . and that's how it is."

"But, what now, since Miss Blake . . . ?"

"I think it was the final. I go back to France . . . it was much better that way."

I nodded. There seemed to have been a hell of a mix-up. Lloyd Marcus and Yvonne Gishard had met in Europe, and he had sponsored her migration, but now, with one thing and another, they were washed up.

I wondered if the prospect of coming into a fortune had affected Marcus. Then the door opened. A charcoal, horn-rimmed glasses, mouse of a monocle, sharp face, snarled, Yvonne Gishard stood up.

"Monsieur," she said, "this is, Monsieur Norton, he has got something important to speak to you. He asks about Michelle Spencer, but I think he means Michelle Blake . . ."

He froze. His owl-like eyes stared at me through the thick glasses.

"Who are you, Mr. Norton?"

Fun With Crypto-Crax

CRACK the "code" and restore the punch line to an amazing quip. That part of the story given provides a clue as to the sense of the missing line, letters of which have been substituted for by others.

Here is the quip:

Patient: "How come you put me in a ward with a crazy man?"

Doctor: "Hospital's crowded—what makes you think he's crazy?"

Patient: "XN HXNWT YHJHRA, CKTHDAE TQUBAG, 'AH YHJAT, AH FBCKPT, AH XYXWKK-APT,--KAE RUV PXX PEEK PXX PHHXT GDDV HIG PXX."

CRYPTIC HINT

IN the letter expected to occur most frequently in any group of common English words, followed by T, A, Q, N, I, etc., in that order. In the above crypt, however, E and O are used the same number of times each—meaning, of course, that their substituted letters appear a like number of times. As a clue we'll give you their substitutes—H and X. Which is which?

pny kxnsa xpy xwpy xpy gy pyx--"xwpykpy as "xwpy as
xwpy xpy, "xwpy xwpy xwpy xwpy xpy, xwpy

Perhaps a minute passed. I heard the faint creak of a board, and could almost mentally see the hood creeping along the passage to the room where I was hiding. Now, the door was slowly opening. My eyes were used to the gloom. I waited, still-like, ready to spring. I saw the shape of a hand with a gun in it, reached for one long second the urge to snatch. The hand moved up slightly, and I caught it by the wrist, twisting with all my strength.

The pistol shot across the room. The hood wrenched his head free with a savage jerk.

"That ain't gonna help you, Norton," he gruffed.

His left shot out. I moved to avoid it, but it was a feint, and he chopped a right hand on my upper jaw bone I closed with him, chopping my palm hard on his neck. He grunted. My knee came up, viciously, and I threw a left hook that caught his Adam's apple. He fell backward, and I was at him, hitting hard, left and right. He went to the floor.

I picked up the pistol, and found it was my own. I reloaded it, went downstairs. The other hood was groaning on the floor. I left. I

"You're waiting . . . My Marcus, sir?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry. It's lunch-time. He's out in . . . won't be back until about two."

It was obvious the girl was going out to lunch, too.

"All right. But it's important. May I wait?"

She hesitated. I walked forward into the room.

"Of course, if you wish. I'll tell Mr. Marcus's personal assistant, Miss Gishard, you are here."

She disappeared into another room, came out with somebody who could have stepped out of a fashion magazine.

"You may go, Isabel," the maid to the girl I'd nearly bumped into, "I will attend to the gentleman."

Isabel left.

"You don't mind if I wait, Miss Gishard? It's very important."

. . . you sit down."

She was petite, neat, her black hair short, curly, and she had the broad of scruff that comes only from Paris I sat down. She bowed herself at a desk. My eyes strayed from my magazine, and I found her looking at me.

I stood up, produced a card. He snatched the newspaper from his hand, put it under his armpit to take the card.

"Ray Norton . . . private investigator? I was: You wish to talk to me—please come this way. M'ville Gidson, you may go to lunch, now."

"But, Monsieur Morton, I tell you before, I ate the sandwiches, the fruit, drank the milk in the office."

"Well, go shopping," he snapped. "Go anywhere. Have the afternoon off."

She shrugged. "Our . . ." I felt her eyes on me as I followed Morton past her, and into his office. I closed the door behind me.

"Please sit down, Mr. Norton."

I sat down. Doctor Morton fidgeted at his desk. Then he walked across the room, opened the door, obviously checking that Yvonne Gidson had gone. He returned to the desk, opened a drawer, produced a pack of cigarettes, lit one, handed me the pack. I lit up, walking in smoke, and waited.

He picked up the afternoon paper, "The Clarion." I had a sinking feeling, knowing the columnist, Wally Kent. He handed me the paper. And there it was . . . the first item.

"Watch this column for developments. At the moment all we can say is that a certain dancer in town has been returned to check on a certain advertisement, and there's more than spending money at stake. Before the inquiry is finished, don't be surprised if you hear many well-known names mentioned. Enough, now!"

My pal—Wally Kent! The smoking cut!

I threw the paper on the desk. Morton watched me closely.

"What do you want to know about Miss Spencer?" he said. "Have you seen that paragraph?"

"Two boys told Miss Spencer might have known you. There is a report she is missing. Your personal secretary, M'ville Gidson, knows nothing about her."

"I don't know what you're talking about when you talk about a Miss Spencer. But I was interested in Miss Blake. In fact . . . we were to be married. Judging by that paragraph, and the fact that you are in my office, you are interested in me."

"Should I be . . ." The death of Miss Linda Blake seems to have been explained. She went boating with Luke Talento. A flitting boat was handy, when the cruiser sank, to rescue Luke—but not Linda. You identified the body, usually through a wrist-watch you had given to Miss Blake. And there was a slight scar on her leg. You remembered the scar."

He flicked his lips, quickly, and looked forward slightly.

"You're thinking something else happened . . . murder?"

"I'm not thinking anything. I'm trying to find out. Linda Blake was running round town, gambling, naturally. She probably owed a lot of

money to Talento. She made a will in your favor. Then she died. You got her money. It's possible you could split with Luke Talento. . . ."

Slowly he stubbed his cigarette, and reached into the drawer. But he didn't produce the cigarette pack. My throat went dry as I stared at the .32 in his hand. The hand wasn't steady. We both tensed at the slight creak. He dropped his voice.

"Stand up, Norton. No more. Move. Put your face against the wall. Hands above your head. If you move, I shoot."

He raised the gun . . . I snugged up, hands high, and moved toward the wall. He stepped across the room, flung open the door, and said "You smoking guy, Yvonne . . . you came back to listen, you . . ."

She spit out a string of four words in French. I couldn't follow them.

"Get to work!" Morton said. "So you think I murdered Linda, you fool? I was out of town the day she went with Talento."

He must have prodded her with the gun. From the corner of my eye I could see her facing the wall, hands high. I wondered if Morton intended to shoot us. He was moving round behind me, but the way his nerves were I guessed this wasn't the time for

me to try tricks. And then . . . something clunked hard on my skull. I tried to struggle, but the wave of pain and blackness spread . . .

Through a mist—how long later I wasn't sure, but I had a feeling it wasn't very long—I could see faces. I shook my head. Slowly the room came into focus. Luke Talento was sitting on the edge of the desk. Near him, holding an automatic, was the apostle I'd seen at the Monsieur Yvonne was in the chair. Morton was standing behind his desk.

"So you've come round, Norton," Talento said. "You think Linda Blake owed me money for gambling debts. She did . . . so what? Pity she hadn't had to thirty and received her inheritance. She could've paid me. But what's the use of talking? Take them away, Nicky. I think . . . sure, out in the launch. Churn them to steel sandals. That'll make them sink!"

Nicky's dead-pen face didn't flicker. He moved the automatic slightly and murmured, "You've been fooled, Norton, and this end has a diamond. I don't care where I hang you off. We're going down in the back lift."

Continued on page 63



"Do you suppose if we seize this bus they'd get up their nerve before the next one comes?"

SPORT QUIZ



by Ray Mitchell



The quiz this month is set for those who have told me that the questions have been too hard. Actually, the questions are easy—it's the answers that are sometimes hard! Followers of the sports mentioned here will find these questions a piece-of-cake. If there is any sport here you do not follow, you should still get a pass if you read the papers. After all, these events all appeared in the newspapers of January/February this year. The possible is 36, but a score of only 17 is bad. You should get at least 26. A score of 26 puts you in the good class. If you get 34, you are very good. Go to it. The first question is the hardest, the rest easy. Cricket scores will test your memory, though. The answers are on page 47.

1. ATHLETICS

In February this year a former athlete died in U.S.A. at the age of 75. He was the first man to run 100 yards in 9.6 seconds. For one point, who was he? If you know, or can work out, the year he set 9.6, take another point.

While with athletics, you may remember that the American mile, Wes Santee, set a new indoor mile record (which time is a lot slower than Lady's outdoor record). About a week afterwards Santee competed against others in a mile race and was beaten late third place. Also he, then of the previous work was beaten. Take a point for the name of the winner of that race and a point for the name of the man who finished second.

2. BOXING

Australia's newest star is Col Clarke, a lightweight who is headed for a couple of titles. On February 7 he knocked out Ned Wilson in the sixth round. There was quite a lot of publicity about it so the time, as you should know that, all then he had fought 19 fights and scored . . . how many knockout wins? Take one point for a correct answer.

A second question on boxing. If you read your newspapers, whether or not you are a boxing fan, you will know the names a number of fights listed for West Melbourne Stadium in January/February were transferred to Sydney Stadium. Only one point for that, as it is too easy.

3. CRICKET

Of course, you know that England toured Australia in the fourth Test, so you should be able to answer a dozen questions on it. The first five each carry one point, the 6th is worth two points, the 7th is worth three, the 8th one, the 9th and 10th each two, the 11th one and the 12th two. So cricket is worth 14 points. If you know the answers to all questions. Ready? (1) By what margin did England win the fourth Test? (2) Where was the fourth Test played? (3) What was Aus-

tralia's first leading's total? (4) What was Australia's second leading's total? (5) What was England's first leading's total? (6) Two English bowlers each took six wickets in the Test. Name them. (7) Of the two sides in the complete Test, these bowlers took at least three wickets at an average of less than 20 per wicket. Name the three. (8) In the complete Test, only one batsman was run out. His name? (9) Who top-scored for Australia and what was his score? (10) Who top-scored for England and what was his score? (11) Quite a number of batsmen were out L.B.W. How many? A tip—there was an L.B.W. in Australia's first innings. (12) Every one of Australia's two wicketkeepers. Each made more than one catch. How many catches did each make in the whole Test?

4. CYCLING

This one is very easy for all sportsmen, whether or not you are a cycling fan. Who won the N.S.W. State 1,000 metres sprint title in February? If you don't know, make a guess; you can't miss.

5. GENERAL

All Australians, sportsmen or not, should know about the Helms Award. Each year such recipient names his outstanding athlete, who is given the award. It dates back to 1934. Who was the Australian who got the award for 1934? If you know his name, you should know his sport and that will net you a second point.

6. MOTOR CYCLING

Australia was graced with the presence of a world champion in February. He broke the lap record at Mt. Druitt, N.S.W., and won the Invitation Grand Prix over a course of 25 miles. For one point, who is he? (Oh, isn't this easy?) For a bonus, what speed did he average over the 25-mile course?

7. SWIMMING

On February 2, a young Australian broke the Australian record over 100 metres freestyle by 6.7 seconds in the State titles. Who is he? Take a second point if you know whose record he broke. That is not difficult either.

8. TENNIS

The Australian tennis championships are held at the end of January each year. Maybe you remember in what city they were held this year? If so, take a point. Take another point if you know who won the men's singles. A third point if you know whom he beat in the final. A fourth point if you know the winner of the women's singles and a fifth point if you remember whom she beat in the final.



portfolio of beauty







IN THE SWAMP

Continued from page 10

Jules came first, side on to me, the rifle barrel thrust forward and swinging in small arcs. Behind him came Pierre. Moving slowly in the deep mud, they drew level with where I crouched. They stopped there. Our backwater joined the main creek at an angle.

Pierre touched Jules's arm and pointed to something in the mud. Jules began to turn, slowly pulling one leg out of knee-deep, clinging mud, and dropping his eyes to follow Pierre's pointing hand.

I stood up and came to full draw in one swift movement, my eyes focused on Jules's belt buckle.

The movement caught his eye. As his head lifted I loosed the arrow and over the flicker of its passage I saw his body jerk, heard his yell of surprised alarm and on a high note of pain. He jerked around. The rifle went off, and leaves drifted down around me. I dropped on to one knee, and reached another arrow, watching the upswing.

A bullet cracked in the air over my head like a whiplash, another screamed away behind me in a ricochet. I scrambled back to where Gwen crouched, floundering in the deep mud between the rooted mangrove roots. I pushed Gwen behind an upthrust of cowering wood, while somebody emptied the rifle magazine at us.

I didn't hear the bullet that hit me. I was hunched over in front of Gwen, then something exploded inside my head. I remember a scream from Gwen as I tried to stand up and blacked out.

I came to up to my neck in water. Pain blacked me out again. I woke up and I was retching water. I lay against a clump of roots. Thirst was torturing. I struggled to look around. A torrent of dirty grey flowed about me, the rain still poured on the leaves, my hand came away from the throbbing lump over one ear, and it was streaked with blood.

I remembered the bow, and floundered trying to find it. It was some distance away, one arrow was all I could find. The water kept rising. When I stood up, my surroundings had a strange look of receding and coming back; my eyes didn't want to focus properly. Some time later I found myself sitting on the bank of the creek, watching the Larrim trying to yank her anchor. The creek was in high flood, with debris of all kinds coming down, the rain, too, was still coming down.

I picked a fairly big log that was caught up near the bank, placed the bow and arrow securely in a fork, and pushed off down stream. Nothing moved in the swift current carried me towards the straining anchor rope. The dully creaking anchor, but I decided that it was too risky to attempt a leading back there.

I didn't had myself. I was in pretty poor shape for a fight. Pierre was still fighting fit even if Jacques and Jules were injured, and I didn't know how badly they had been hit.

I grabbed the anchor rope and eased the log in against the side of the launch. The current tried to snatch it away when I stood on it to try and clamber aboard. I made it, and I lay there on the deck, waiting for everything to stop spinning. An easy mark for Pierre if he stepped out carrying the 303.

Precariously I moved aft, flexing the bow and wondering how the wet string would act. I noticed that the arrow I had was a blunt with an angry .360 shell case on the end of the shaft, the type usually used against birds. Well, it would have to do this time.

A sudden grasp of pain and a torrent of French burst from the cabin below. I stopped.

"Pierre, you clumsy fool, be more careful, that's my sore leg."

"Bah, you're too soft, Jacques! A bit of an arrow wound and you squeal like a stuck pig."

"Stuck pig, eh? You'd squeal too, if you copped one. It took you all your time to pull it out. And you let him live!"

"He was practically dead as it was, only the girl didn't know it. So—why kill a dead man?"

"Why kill him? Look at Jules, look at his face! Look at me—and all through one man. And you let him live because of a woman, bah, I say!"

"Ah, but what a woman!" Pierre sounded very pleased with himself. "First, she nearly scratched my eyes out, so, I knocked her down. Then she charged suddenly. With the knife against his throat she pleaded with me, she would do anything, anything, so long as I let him live. So we made a bargain. One should always please a woman, Jacques. What is wrong with that?"

"You can laugh. You think that you've got her all to yourself, don't you, Pierre?"

"I not only think, my friend, but I know it. Do you think that you, with your crippled leg, or Jules, lying there, can take her away from me? Just try!"

The silence that followed this outburst could have been cut with a knife. I stepped around the corner to the top of the steps that led into the main cabin, the bow at half draw, awaiting the varying expressions of sheer suspense that would be mirrored on the three faces that swung towards me.

Gwen was huddled on a bunk in the far corner, her blonde hair no longer a halo. One eye was half closed, and showed a big bruise.

Jacques, perched on a bunk supported his wounded leg on the centre table. Pierre standing near him, a roll of bandage in his hand. Jules, at full stretch on another bunk, was covered by a blanket. The rifle was

there, too, against the wall by Jules' bunk.

For a few seconds the tableau held, then dissolved into a blur of movement. Gwen straightened up in her corner. I saw Jacques, too, grab his wounded leg with both hands as if to lower it to the floor, but it was Pierre that focused my whole attention.

It had expected him to make a bid for the rifle, or plunge for the cover of the engine-room door, or maybe both. Gwen said afterwards that I looked like death himself standing there, one side of my face a mass of searing blood, my shirt streaked with blood and mud, eyes glazed. I was swaying like a drunken man.

Instantly, his head jerked up and sent the lamp of cloth hurtling towards me. He followed in a wild plunge towards my legs.

I yelled, "Grab the rifle, Gwen!" and loosed the arrow. As Jules reached the foot of the steps the blunt arrow took him in the stomach. The soaked string had absorbed some of the usual force of the blow, and I wasn't in a fit condition to use it well, otherwise the arrow, blunt-headed as it was, would have punched a hole right through here at that range.

He sagged against the steps, and I drove my foot into his throat. He went over sideways between the table and the banks. I went to jump down the steps. The cabin started to spin, and I got there slowly. Gwen had the rifle, and was making back towards me along the empty berths on the slide way from Jacques and Jules.

Gwen joined me, breathing quickly, her blue eyes alight with excitement. I took the rifle and handed her the bowstring. "Tie his hands behind his back," I said. "And make it tight. And you!" I added looking at Jacques, "Get up forward into the engine-room."

I stood there, frightened to move, and watched him hobble away. Gwen was making a good job with Pierre and things were getting busy.

"How's that?" I heard Gwen ask, her voice coming from miles away.

"Atta girl!" I said, and went to climb the steps.

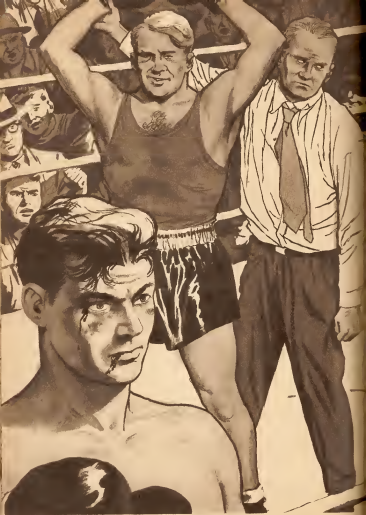
My head fellowed on something vault when I opened my eyes. Gwen's lap. Her hand felt around me like a cup. When she saw my eyes open, her cheek dropped to mine. Her voice was a soft whisper with a catch in it. "Oh Steve—darling! I thought your eyes would never open."

The ache in my head had lessened, the pillow was soft, and Gwen was there close. I took a big breath. "Hello, Angel, where am I?"

"You're here on the Larrim—," the blue eyes widened suddenly. Her lips stretched wide with joy. "How are you Steve?"

"Do that again, Angel?" I said, "and I'll tell you."

THE END





GRUDGE FIGHT

ALAN KENT • FICTION

The kid had been beaten up in the boxing tent and robbed by the troupe manager, but the irate carnival-goers and the doctor stood by him to the end—and what an end!

A woman screamed as the youngster reeled backwards, tripped, and sprawled on his back, almost at our feet. We recognized him at once. It was the kid who had fought Battling Bragg in Raven's boxing sideshow. I looked quickly at the faces which were rapidly forming themselves into a circle round the fallen kid. On the far side was Bragg himself, a leer hovering over his ugly, battered face.

Their bout of an hour ago had been very willing, and the kid had protested loudly when the decision had gone against him. Bad feeling had sprung up between the two, but I didn't think they'd start anything outside among the crowd.

Bragg stood quite still, making no attempt to further the attack. But his big gnarled fists were clenched, at the ready. He still wore his performing dress—black shorts, a blue singlet with "Raven's Troupe" sewn on in red letters, and a dirty, once white dressing gown.

Ten years ago the man would have been really dangerous, but he must have been on the wrong side of forty now, and he was cracking up fast. His puffy, beaten face testified that in his prime he had been a fighter, not a boxer. The beaten nose. The misshapen ear. A fighter, backed about till he had been pushed from the stadium to travelling with a second-rate vaudeville troupe, fighting the locals for a few bob. The colour of his nose and the somewhat vacant look at the back of his eyes told another tale too. He was obviously fond of gin.

He moved his head and wiped the sweat from a wrinkled forehead. His eyes were on the youngster. Ready. Waiting. Everyone was silent, waiting to see what the kid would do. Each second brought new spectators, even some of the speakers from the nearby stalls.

The youngster sat up slowly. Blood from his cut lip trickled down his chin. He moved his head slowly from side to side.

"He doesn't even know he's bleeding," said a woman at the back of me.

Their bout had been very willing and the kid had protested loudly when the decision had gone against him.

I glanced round. Excitement showed in her eyes, she was clapping the same. Bruce, my brother, now his, too. His contempt for her showed.

I tapped the sleeve of his coat. "Come on," I said. "Let's give the kid a hand. He looked a bit scared."

"He looks as though he could do with a bit of help," Bruce agreed.

As we stepped out from the crowd, he did Bragg an ugly look on his face.

"Stop me and you'll be sorry."

Bragg looked me up and down, but made no move. I was as big as he, and with no loose flesh. He stopped aside and called to the kid.

"Scared, punk? If you want any more you know where to get it."

The kid flushed. Then he spoke. "I won't fight here like a drunken bruiser, Bragg. But I'll see you again in the right place. Three o'clock, isn't it?"

"Yeah. If you don't get cold feet."

The kid stiffened. Bruce gripped his arm.

"Steady, fellow," he said quietly.

Bragg pushed his way suddenly through the crowd, and headed for Raven's big antique. The crowd broke up, the speakers shouted again, and the harsh music from a nearby merry-go-round filled the air.

Bruce was dabbing at the cut lip with his handkerchief, but every time he stopped the blood oozed again. The lad and nothing, stood still with his head back, waiting for the blood to stop.

What I saw I liked. Quite young, his frame was big and powerful. The rolled-up sleeves on his shirt showed tanned, muscular arms, a single tattoo on each. Tight fitting denim jeans suggested the power and strength of his legs.

His blue eyes caught mine; the tension in them eased, and he grinned. He took the handkerchief in one hand and held out the other to me. The grip was hard, almost fierce.

"Thanks." Then, turning to Bruce, "and you too."

"Forget it."

"You know," went on the kid, "you were taking a bit of a risk, getting tangled up with Bragg. He's mean."

"I can take care of myself," I told him.

"Gimme up. But . . . well . . . you don't look like the type who does much fighting."

His eyes took in my new lightweight summer suit, pastel shirt and wind-resistant silk tie.

"You'd be surprised," Bruce said. I glanced over quickly and he stopped speaking.

"Lip still bleeding?" I asked.

He took the handkerchief away and immediately the blood ceased again.

"Come and fill it up," I offered.

"I'm a doctor, Doctor Barrett. This is my brother, Bruce."

The kid started, and a look of recognition came into his eyes; but he did not say anything other than to introduce himself as Steve Jamieson.

By the time we reached my car the lip had almost stopped bleeding anyway, so it wasn't difficult to dress it. Steve looked at himself in the rear-view mirror.

"Say," he said admiringly, "that's a real neat job. Thanks, doc."

"You're welcome," I grinned, "but keep out of Bragg's way. It wouldn't take much of a knock to split it and make it really nasty."

The look of astonishment in Steve's eyes intensified.

"Listen, doc," he answered. "Thanks for your interest. But Bragg and I have a score to settle and I've got to get him while he's here in town."

"You've already had one try today," observed Bruce. "And . . ."

Steve flushed again. "You were both there this morning?" he questioned. Bruce and I nodded.

"And who do you think won?"

"Bragg was given the decision," I said.

"And who reinforced?" he persisted.

"Raven," said Bruce.

An expression of contempt flickered over Steve's face.

"Yeah. Raven was the referee, that's why Bragg won. We were fighting for twenty-five grand. Remember? Twenty-five grand is a lot of money to Raven."

I shrugged. "O.K. Steve. It's your tip. Remember, you're rejecting a doctor's advice."

He looked sorry. "Do I look worried?" was his only reply.

"I guess that first fight at the ring was the cause of your little trouble with Bragg afterwards," Bruce observed.

"Uh-uh. He pointed out what I did about the fight being rigged and came around to pick me up an afterwards. But I won't be in a brawl."

"Raven will still be the referee," I said.

"Maybe not," he said with a dry smile. "Maybe not."

Bruce glanced at his watch.

"What a bit?" I asked.

"Quarter to three."

Steve said, "I don't want to mess out." He opened the door of the car and stepped on to the hot black surface of the parking lot. "Are you fellows coming, too, or do I say goodbye?"

"Let's go," I said. "I guess I'd better be on the spot to repair the spot."

Steve allowed his way through the crowd. He moved quickly and impatiently, even though Raven's antique was not more than two hundred yards away. He moved business, and people gave him plenty of room. We tagged behind.

Obviously, news of the grade fight had circulated pretty freely. People were nudging each other and pointing at us. Then they drifted in behind us and started moving in the same direction. Steve didn't seem to notice, but Bruce did.

By now we were almost at the big marquee. A far-dazed crowd was already waiting for Raven and his

boys to appear on their platform. We arrived just as the flap of the marquee was drawn back. Raven and one of his boys, came through, climbed the stairs to the platform, and ranged themselves in a line. Bragg was one and—Though he stood quite still, his eyes scanned the crowd, looking for witnesses. When he saw Steve he turned to the side of the platform and deliberately spit on the ground. I shot a glance at Steve. He just left the gesture, and he was trembling with anger.

A half-canoe stood beside a big box drum, drumstick in hand. Two others held hand bells. At a nod from Raven, they began banging and ringing. The harsh sound filled in with the noise well enough.

Raven signalled, and the noise stopped. Then he stepped to the front of the platform, microphone in hand. Even from where I was standing, I saw enough to dislike him immediately.

A glorified hobo. His trousers, probably once blue, gave the impression that he had just climbed down under a car. Utterly naked too there was a gaudy green shirt, too small for him to button up at the neck, nevertheless a tin hang there, a yellow one. Blatant as the man himself.

He stood for a moment, fingering the dark stubble on his chin, waiting for a few on the outskirts of the crowd to come closer. Then he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and started into his sales talk in a somewhat fogged voice that betrayed the presence of alcohol.

"Come on, folks, roll up, roll up! Up here to the greatest little boxing troupe in the country. Raven's Boxing Boys—and not a finer group of fighters to be found anywhere. I repeat that, ladies and gentlemen—anywhere. And now here for your entertainment."

He nodded and we were given an other dose of drum and bell. Bruce grinned. "That's a hell of a scene," he muttered, "but it's certainly no worse than Raven's howling."

"You'll hear a lot more of both before you've finished," Steve added.

We did too. One by one, Raven introduced his troupe to the crowd, describing their prowess in extravagant terms. Nobody took his claims seriously, for they had been to better exhibitions many times, but something in Raven's style of speaking and moving held the interest, and the crowd gradually became larger.

Bragg was introduced last. He was obviously the best performer in the show, for the guarantee was that twenty-five pounds would be given to anyone succeeding in beating him over three rounds. The crowd roared more than usually interested in Bragg. They seemed to know who was going to challenge him.

Then Raven started calling for volunteers to try their skill. Before long, three minor contests had been arranged. The half-canoe with the drum was challenged by a young tin-

SEASHORE SIREN





ner worker down the river, and both bellringers found themselves with opponents from among the local talent. The challenges had been quick, and Raven was pleased. He grinned. From behind the colorless lips stood two rows of dirty, uneven teeth.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, there is room for one more contest on our fine programme. I have three boys left here to choose from."

He indicated a skinny, almost frightened-looking youngster of about seventeen "Young Blacy Snowdon? Imported direct from Clonsbury, Queensland, for your approval, ladies and gentlemen. Blacy will undertake to fight anyone within seven pounds of his own fighting weight of 8-3."

He paused. There were no challengers. He continued:

"Well then, what about Eddie Morton? Step forward, Eddie." Eddie, the other half-caste in the show, surveyed the crowd arrogantly, across folded. But again no one moved. Everyone was silent, waiting. Bragg was next.

Raven moved up to him and placed an affectionate hand on his shoulder. "I know what it is," he said, seemingly to no one in particular. "Every-one wants to see the champ in action. Don't they, champ?"

Bragg smirked at the word "champ" and stepped forward with one arm raised above his head as though he had already won any fight that might take place. With his hand on the fighter's shoulder, Raven turned.

"Yes, ladies and gentlemen," he

boasted, "Betting Bragg here is the champ of this little outfit, and I've got twenty-five quid to say he can't be beaten over three rounds. By ap-point."

He dived his hand into his pocket and pulled out a roll of crumpled notes.

"Look! See! There it is: twenty-five quid. And it belongs to the fighter who has the guts and strength to go three rounds with the better and beat him in fair fight."

"Fair fight he damned!" a loud voice sounded from a bit to our right. Raven spun round towards it as though along this axis searched among the crowd for its owner.

"Who said that?" he demanded angrily.

"I did." A short, stocky fellow whom I remembered had sat near us during the previous session and had been almost as loud as Steve in protesting at the decision, now obviously had a few beers in him, and was in an argumentative mood.

"And who do you think you are?" sneered Raven.

The drunk looked to his mates for support, then said:

"I mean this morning you cheated a young feller out of twenty-five quid fightin' this bruiser. The youngster won, but you squibbed, and kept the dough. That's right, isn't it?" he shouted to the crowd in general.

Raven started to say that he'd been in the fight game all his life and there wasn't a thing he didn't know about boxing, but the crowd began to take up the cry, and drowned him out.

When they questioned Steve sufficiently for him to be heard, Raven yelled, "Listen, ladies and gentlemen, please!" Then he started, as though a sudden idea had occurred to him. "Listen!" he yelled again. "Is the young feller that fought the champ here in the crowd now?"

"Yes!" came from several voices. "Well, then, let him step right up here now," he invited.

People started to clap as Steve pushed his way to the platform, and slowly reached the stairs.

Raven turned to Steve.

"Now, young feller," he said in a wheedling tone. "They say you were cheated of twenty-five quid this morning. You know more about boxing than the whole lot of them put together. I want you to tell them the decision was quite fair, and that you are satisfied."

Steve stared him straight in the eyes and said, "You mean that I'm a bell of a man, Raven?"

"So you're cryin', too, are you?" sneered Raven. "I thought you were made of better stuff, kid. The bruiser's been fouling, I tell you, and it's too late to alter the decision. But I'll tell you what—"

He pulled out his notes again, and slowly counted out five singles, while the crowd watched him with mounting interest.

"It's not my policy to argue with my customers," he said, "and I've got the reputation of my show to think about, so I'll tell you what I'll do, kid. I'll give you five pounds and we'll call it quits. What about it, eh?"

The noise was extended strongly. Steve looked at them for a moment.

"You offered twenty-five pounds to the winner of your match last morning. Well, that was me. Give me the other twenty and I'll go."

A round of applause broke out. Raven was red in the face.

"What's done is done, I tell you," he snarled. "It's too late now."

"O.K. then, listen to me," said Steve. He grabbed the note away from Raven and turned and faced the onlookers.

"Ladies and gentlemen! I challenge Bragg to a return bout here and now. I'm willing to pay twenty-five pounds if I'm beaten, but if I win, Raven has to give me twenty-five notes. How does it sound?"

A storm of cheering and whistling greeted the challenge. I didn't like the look in Raven's eyes. He was scared by the turn of events. He stood so low too much. Harshly he snatched the note back.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he appealed. "Please. This young fellow has you so much on his side that I won't be game to give the decision against him unless the Barber actually knocks him out."

"Well, can't he?" shouted the drunk, and everyone laughed.

"I've got the answer," called out Steve. "We'll get an independent referee."

Before Raven could interrupt, Steve continued. "Right here among us we have the amateur middleweight champion of the state—Dr. Athol Barrett."

Steve called me over, a look of apology on his face.

"Dr. Barrett," he said. "I'm sorry to call on you like this but would you oblige us?"

"Very well," I replied briefly, and turned to walk from the platform eager to get away from the uncomfortable limelight. Raven's look as I passed here could have killed me.

"I'm sorry, Raven," I said. "but it looks as though you have no choice."

And he hadn't. If he'd tried to stop things then or refused to the challenge, the crowd would have wrecked his show. They were in the mood.

"We start in ten minutes," he snapped anxiously.

I went back to Bruce. "How the hell did Steve know who I was?" I asked him.

"Stop kidding yourself. Your photo is always in the papers."

Raven came back on the flap of the newspaper and signified to over.

"Here we go," said Bruce.

I followed Raven down the aisle to the ring between two wild masses of people. It was doubtful whether any more could have fitted in to see the fight. The showman's face was very glad.

"Don't worry, Raven," I said, nodding to the number of onlookers. "You'll still make a pocket."

"I'll need to," he replied reluctantly. "with you rolling."

I ignored the snarl. Taking off my coat and tie, I climbed through

the ropes into the ring. The onlookers were already in their corners, waiting tensely.

Raven had made the preliminary announcements and introductions before I came in. I walked to the center of the ring and signalled both fighters to me.

"You know the rules as well as I do, cheap," I warned. "Keep it clean. Don't hit low, and break cleanly from the clinches. Any questions?"

There were none.

Steve expanded his gloves, but Bragg just turned and walked back to the corner, ignoring them. An angry murmur came from the crowd, but Steve just shrugged.

The bell sounded. Bragg moved out slowly in a shuffle, his eyes narrowed to slits, intently watching his opponent's moves.

The youngster was more agile. He danced out lightly and circled round the older man, looking for an opening. Suddenly it presented itself. His left

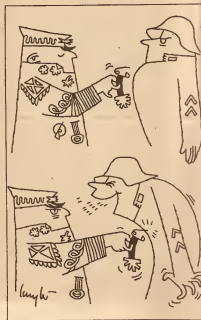
arm shot out and jerked Bragg's head back sharply.

Bragg dodged the follow-up blow and continued with a savage blow to the heart. Steve warned and backed away. Bragg followed, like a bear shuffling up to a horse.

Steve dashed under two murderous swings to the head, but took another hard one on the heart. In return he gave a hard right cross that made the pain well up in Bragg's weary eyes.

The round continued, with honours about even. For every point that one of them gained, the other soon equaled. But the interesting thing was the way Steve managed to keep his lip out of the way of Bragg's swimming header.

As the bell for the end of the round sounded, both fighters returned to their corners. Being right inside the ring with them I could get a better impression of their style than the watchers.



Bragg was past his prime, and looked like he'd be out of the show in a year or two. His reflexes were slowing and he was making too much punishment. As he sat slumped in his corner with Raven working on him, I felt sorry for the man.

On Steve's side were youth and enthusiasm, but he was still *really* very raw. Apart from the saving of his cut lip, the rest of his defense had too many loopholes for safety.

At the end of the second round, Steve's lip was still intact, but red glove marks swelled the rest of his body. Bragg showed signs of wear, his right eye was almost closed and

The crowd on two sides of the ring seemed to know. A storm of shouting broke out on protest as a foul, but I could give no ruling. If it was a foul, and an intentional one, Bragg had certainly placed himself in the right position to arrange it.

I signalled him over to a neutral corner, and started the count over Steve. His face was pale, but at three his eyelids flickered. The look on his face said he would be up to finish the fight, win or lose, lip or no lip. At the count of eight he came to his feet, swaying a little.

Bragg moved in swiftly with an

arm hooked in his victory. He was too busy trying to stop the flow of blood.

The crowd showed their approval of the verdict. There were loud and vigorous cheers for Steve as he pushed his way wearily towards the smaller tent which served as a dressing room. And there were jeers at Bragg's limp body was carried from the ring by Raven and one of his boys. The look on Raven's face was really something. Not only had he lost considerable prestige, but fifty pounds as well. But for all his losses I knew that he would still show a profit on the day, the crowd was so big.

Raven was at the ringside with my coat. I put it on, and we walked out into the open air. It was fresh and invigorating after the packed atmosphere.

"Had enough?" Bruce asked.

"I nodded."

"I'll just drop into the dressing room and see if I'm wanted to do any patching up or rewiring."

I left Bruce and walked over to the small tent. I would have walked straight in, but on the flap was a sign which said, "NO ADMITTANCE." I hesitated at the entrance. Someone was mentioning my name.

I pulled the flap slightly to one side and peeped in. Bragg was lying on a stretcher, his head in his hands. Raven with him, wiping his face with a damp cloth. Steve was standing over them, watching. All had their backs to me. It was Steve who was talking.

"Thanks to Doc Bennett, it worked O.K. again, Raven. And I guess it'll still be good for a few more times yet."

Raven looked up at him and grinned. Not a bad grin for a man who was just supposed to have lost fifty pounds.

"Yeah," he said. "The Doc here there made things look real genuine."

Steve ignored him and turned and nudged Bragg painfully in the ribs.

"And listen, you," he said viciously. "You were told to lay off my lip. You open it again next time and you're fired. Understood? That's why you got really fattered just now."

Bragg started to mumble something by way of apology, but I'd heard enough. I let the flap back carefully and walked slowly back to Bruce.

"How's Steve?" he asked.
"Steve's O.K.," I said. "Steve's O.K."



THE END

ADVICE FOR WRITERS

PROMULGATING your masterly cogitations or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amiable, philosophical, or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your conversational communications demonstrate a clarified consciousness, a compact comprehensibility, no needless explication of previous generalities, jejune belligerence and adrelinic affectations. Let your extemporaneous verbal expositions and explications have lucidity, intelligibility and voracious vivacity without - cadaverousness or Thelma bombast. Sedulously avoid all polyrhythmic profundity, pompous propensity, polysyllabic verbosity and vacillating vagabondy. Show double-intensive, obnoxious jocosity and posthumous profundity, observable or apparent.

In other words, say what you mean, and don't use big words.

the rest of his face red. Both fighters were eyes on points as far as I was concerned. With his greater strength, I think Steve could have been in the lead — maybe he could even have scored a knock out — if he had stood up to the professional and needed punches in a steady barrage, instead of protecting his lip.

The crowd was still solidly on the youngster's side, roaring in approval every time he landed a blow. A great many realized the landing Steve was fighting under, and booed Bragg vigorously every time he tried to open the youngster's lip.

In the early stages of the third round, in contrast to his usual shuffle, Bragg started moving quickly round the ring, with a speed I had not thought he could use. Steve, too, seemed surprised, and slackened his own pace to a more cautious one, eyeing the professional curiously.

Bragg manoeuvred himself between Steve and myself, and with his back to me, launched a sudden and furious attack. I moved quickly to watch for a possible foul, but Steve was already on the canvas. The blow that put him there was low, I knew, but how low I could not say.

out of supreme confidence. In rapid succession he landed two more rips to the body. Another right to the head put Steve back on the ropes, trying desperately to cover up. The crowd screamed as Bragg closed in for the kill. For a moment he stood back, then as the younger man's head drooped, he swung savagely at the injured lip.

The blood spattered swiftly over Steve's face as the glove reconnected. He dropped on one knee. For a moment he stared in disbelief at the blood which was trickling down onto his chest. Then he gave Bragg a look which I shall never forget, a look of savage, concentrated fury.

Slowly he stood up and leaned for a moment against the ropes. Then, as Bragg moved in again, he took one step forward, ducked the haymaker which was intended to end the fight, and put every ounce of energy and strength into a right uppercut which almost lifted Bragg off his feet.

Bragg wobbled to the canvas. There was no need to count. He would not be awake for quite a while.

Steve's hand was unsteady as I raised it above his head. He didn't



*"Of course I'd love you just as much if you
lost all your money . . . and I'd miss you terribly!"*

VENGEANCE OF THE SHARK GOD

Continued from page 17

I glanced around. Just inside the entrance of the Sorcerer's Temple I saw a large rubber-crab crawling toward me on its hairy, pincered legs. We watched as it crept with awkward movements closer and closer to the coral bowl. Then, seemingly with purpose in mind, it claved its way up the side of the luminous receptacle and there it loitered on its rim. Then it slid slowly into the bottom. Makewa slammed down hard the stone cover, trapping the crustacean.

The old witch-doctor fixed me with his burning eyes and spoke:

"Crabs are the despised souls of thieves, scavengers and evildoers, cursed by Hatanio to crawl at the bottom of the sea and up on the land, feeding upon the decomposed flesh of the dead."

Halfway back to the shore, I heard the first sounds of the sharkskin ceremonial drums and the low, pulsating chanting of the Turens who had gathered at the Sorcerer's Temple.

The Ghoul still had his door bolted when I entered the store and, although I pointed out its angry, demanding that he talk with me, I got no response. Several times during the night I heard him laugh loudly, insanely.

It was long after midnight when it happened: I had been restlessly pacing on the verandah, unable to sleep because of the intense despair that gripped me. I knew that the natives would never permit The Ghoul to leave with the sacred bones of a Tureen chief, nor would he give up his treasure without a final physical encounter.

As I paced restlessly backward and forward, the break trade winds brought me the sounds of the sepulchral chanting of the natives in the village and, slightly lower in tone, the nervous throbbing of their sharkskin ceremonial drums. It was at the height of their frenetic hub-bub that I heard The Ghoul's door thrown open.

Startled, I whirled around and drew my pistol. A dark shape lurched past me! It was The Ghoul, crouched low, running on all fours! But it was not the lops of a quadruped animal. He was scrambling slightly sideways across the floor—like a huge crab! His head was twisted back over his shoulder and the terrible expression on the man's face stopped me dead in my tracks. It was distorted with excruciating agony. Foam was bubbling from his thick curved lips and he was uttering horrible choked cries. His body jerked violently, as if strung on wires and pulled by a giant's hand. When his blinding eyes closed upon me he recoiled. Then, with one wild leap he sprang off the verandah and began crawling swiftly down the beach.

I seized a flash-light from the verandah table and rushed down the steps after him.

"Stop you fool! You hear! Stop!" My frantic cries jangled wildly in my ears.

He moved so quickly that I lost him in the coconut grove. But further down the coral strand I saw him in the bright moonlight, leaping grotesquely toward the southern end of the atoll. I ran after him yelling hoarsely: "Come back! Come back!" I had almost overtaken him when he whirled about suddenly and headed across the low isthmus that connected the two islets of Turea. Here he was concealed by a thick growth of pandanus trees. I could follow him now only by his fearful cries.

When I emerged on the opposite side of the atoll I saw him far ahead where the sea broke over the low fringing reefs. He had stopped. His twisted body arched high and his head lifted in a listening, watchful attitude. I moved quietly behind the trunks of the coconut palms until I was close to him and then I stepped out from my concealment to corner him. Then I saw what had made him stop! Drugged up across the coral strand was the disembowelled carcass of a tiger-shark, its belly ripped wide open by a pearl diver's knife. Green crabs were clustered thickly about it. The Ghoul was stealthily approaching the dead shark as I watched, he suddenly made a wild rush and fell screaming among the crabs, crushing them in his hands.

I yelled at him. He heaved me and his head snapped back as if impelled by a spring. His legs and arms stiffened and with a short convulsive dance he sprang into the air. He vaulted the dead shark and scurried off again on hairy, stilted legs. He dived in his mad run into the shallow pools of water on the strand, crawling frantically across the coral-funged ledges, deeply lacerating his body and limbs. I kept shouting at him to stop.

He dashed into the coconut grove again and I heard the dull impact of his body crashing against the boles of the palms. I followed his path now by large clots of blood.

When I ran out on to the beach I did not at first pick him out. The rays of the moon were casting so many fantastic shapes in the hollows and crevices of the coral strand that I had to wait until I saw something move. I became conscious of the fact, as I waited here, breathing heavily, that the sounds of the drums and the chanting had ceased. Then I heard a scuffling sound and a splash close by. A dark figure grew out of the ledge in front of me. I saw The Ghoul clamber on the reef. The moonlit sky and the landscape seemed irradiated now with a mystic incandescence, and in the eerie glow I saw him scrambling across the lagoon in the direction of the great barrier-reef of Turea, making his way by the connecting coral growths.

Suddenly I saw something else which made me cry out again to the deranged man. It was the high, white

fin of the Carcharias-killer following in the deep water alongside The Ghoul!

I watched with helpless dread until the crazed man reached the great reef of Turea where on its lower slope he threw himself prostrate. He huddled there in abjectly long time. I was momentarily certain that he had collapsed from loss of blood, but just as I was about to turn and run to the village for assistance, he moved and his head lifted wearily. It was just at this precise second that disaster swept in on him.

A mighty wave was charging in from far out, its crest plumed with white foam, rising higher and higher against the moon's brilliance. The Ghoul's inhuman shriek of despair reached me across the wide lagoon, as he sprang back frantically to avoid it. But he moved too slowly and with a deafening explosion which shook the adjoining reefs to their foundations the gigantic wave broke across the wide margin, burying deeply in frothy turbulence the reef where The Ghoul had been stretched out only a second or two before. A monstrous wave out of a giant, summer night sea!

When the backwash of the shattered timber had drained off the high reef in a welter of foam, I saw that it was empty. Farther out in the ocean in the eddying vortex I sighted the head and flapping arms of The Ghoul. His terrified screams filled the night. Then I saw the quick flash of a white shark-fin close to him! A second later The Ghoul was jerked below the surface.

Shortly after daybreak the witch-doctor and the chief came to the store and took back the skeleton to the crypt in the reef. Just before noon, pearl divers found the mangled body of The Ghoul straggled on a shelf-ledge off Turea. Rumors brought me a few of the man's possessions that had been found in his pockets.

I was dropping a few coins, keys and miscellaneous papers of The Ghoul's into a large envelope when an object caught my eye. It was a gold ring—a man's ring—and one I had seen before! I read the initials etched in the inner band: FEV. Pierre Etienne Villard!

Now I had conclusive statements to make in my official report concerning the death of Turea Makewa, whom the natives of Turea had named so fittingly "The Ghoul!"

Had Makewa, the witch-doctor of Turea, transformed The Ghoul into a human crab, symbolical of a despised desecrator of the dead? Of course, you could say that he was caught in the grip of delirium tremens, or that he was suffering from some form of brain fever brought on by the poisonous coral cuts. But I have lived long enough in the South Seas not to take too lightly the strange powers of native priests.

THE END

Outdoor
look...



• **College**—The young couple were at the golf course in the City for the weekend. They were in a friendly mood. To another from the outdoor golf, the situation will be changing. Finally, with the warm sun and a healthy sun.

■ Well, let's admit it, we haven't done it. But it's the time's going to be there, isn't it? And you see the best of it, and we're holding off.

Outdoor look...



• When you're not too sure of your
face, but still you want to make it
look like a masterpiece, use a
good quality skin cream.

• But when you're not too sure of
your complexion and don't want to
use makeup, use a good quality
skin cream to help you look
like a masterpiece.





A Dead Man Saved His Life

JAMES HOLLEDGE • FACT

When the travelling salesman was told he must share a room with a dead man he thought it was a joke—until he found the corpse had been his rival.

Eddie Capps, at last report, was a sorry old man of Detroit, retired now for some years. As though it were only yesterday, he can remember the events of a stormy night more than half a century ago when a dead man saved his life.

Eddie was then a young tobacco salesman, his route wound through the wild, mountainous backblocks of Kentucky where moonshiners thrived. One May afternoon he drove his buggy into the small town of Middleboro, where he planned to spend the night. A clerk with the looking clerk of his hotel changed his mind, because the clerk told Capps his friendly rival and competitor, Gus Lobe, had passed through the town the previous day. With Lobe travelling just ahead of him like that, there would be little business left for Capps, and he had to catch Lobe up. The clerk said his rival was heading for the town of Barbooreville.

Capps thought he might even get ahead of Lobe if he took a short cut through the mountains, and inquired about the route, but the locals said it was twice as rough as a track on cowpath through "pretty dangerous country" infested with hillbillies who would "sit a throne for a peck of good corn likker."

But Capps was a cleverer salesman who could not let his competitor steal a march on him. He set out immediately, even though a storm was threatening, ignoring the good advice.

His buggy could not negotiate the track, so it was left behind at the livery stable at Middleboro. He saddled his mare, Sally, and loaded his precious saddle-bags.

They jugged away out of town and Capps turned Sally's head into the hills when they came to the short cut. He was entering a region that was practically beyond the law, relying on a 44 Smith and Wesson to protect himself. He did not feel quite so confident a little later, when darkness descended and he could see only a few feet ahead.

The storm broke. Rains lashed down on the solitary horseman. Thunder and lightning terrified the mare. A tree crashed down in the

path. Man and beast started and pushed on.

When they reached the track and were plainly lost, Capps grew scared. It was midnight and he had not seen sign of life for hours. At first he noticed occasional mile markers off the track, but there were no more of those.

The mare's head was drooping, but she picked her way safely toward Capps, hopelessly lost, dropped the reins to let her choose her own route, hoping her instinct would lead them out.

Suddenly Sally seemed to find something. She jerked up her head and broke into a trot. Peering through the dark, Capps distinguished a dilapidated old shed. The mare went straight through the open door into what was apparently a stable. Through the darkness came the soft neigh of another horse.

Capps sighed with relief. The horse meant there must be people nearby—people who could provide food, and even shelter. He was about to dismount when a dog came bounding through the door. Its snarling changed his mind. He stayed in the saddle and waited for its master.

Presently a light flickered out in the darkness and rain and a man came into the shed. When he lifted a lantern, Capps saw one of the most evil and villainous-looking faces he had ever met.

The newcomer looked in his 60s, but as strong as a gorilla. Great shoulders were hunched; his arms looked like huge pendulums; he wore a shaggy beard a foot long, and carried the light in one hand. In the other was a menacing shotgun.

He put down the lantern and pointed the gun at Eddie Capps.

"Who are you? What do you want?" he growled.

The young salesman quickly explained how Sally had found the open stable door, and asked for shelter for the night. For a few moments the other did not speak. His shrewd eyes seemed to be weighing Capps. Finally he

saturated with gore. The skull had been beaten in, apparently as the man slept. For all the marked features of the face, Capps was able to recognize it. The murdered man was his rival salesman, Gus Lobe.

Sick with terror now, Eddie Capps dropped the covering. He staggered over and fell down on the other bed.

His mind still worked. What had happened was crystal clear. Gus Lobe had also taken the short cut, and had crept to the cabs the previous evening to escape the storm. That was his home keeping Sally company out in the stable. Then, for his few belongings and the stock and samples he carried, he had been brutally murdered in his bed by the strange host.

The same fate was undoubtedly planned for Capps. He tried to think what he could do to prevent it. He felt for his gun; it was his only hope.

He crept lie down and pretend to sleep. Eventually that would draw the killer to the attic. He would never come while he thought the victim was still awake.

The pistol gave Capps a slight chance of turning the tables if he caught the man by surprise. In a straight-out gun duel, however, he was at a disadvantage against the other's shotgun. Numbly he dropped his head on the floor. Then, although the thought of being alone in the dark with the object in the other bed almost petrified him, he blew out the candle. When his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he saw a rim of light round the trapdoor in the floor. He tiptoed over and cautiously lowered his body so that he could peer through the crack into the room below.

The man and woman were busily going through his belongings, as though Eddie Capps was already dead and the prize was theirs. They gossiped over each article, arguing and fighting as to who should have it.

A third person appeared below, a huge, half-wild negro who had apparently been asleep or is hiding in some antechamber. The negro's mouth sagged open in a silly grin, his eyes were set in a vacant, uncomprehending stare. In his hand was a massive wooden club.

Capps's terror returned and overwhelmed him, so he could hardly lift himself up and stagger over to the empty bed.

He lay down trying to wring some possible solution out of a brain benumbed with fright. Then to him out of the darkness there seemed to come a whisper. The words came from the other cot and they said: "Change places with me . . . change places with me."

Later, when the events of the ghastly night were behind him except for the terrifying dreams that haunted him for years, Eddie Capps was prepared to admit that it was probably his own subconscious mind telling him what to do. But he still liked to think it might really have been the dead

Gus Lobe, suggesting his one hope to escape.

Capps crept across the attic. He lifted the body and carried it back to the bed he was expected to occupy. He pulled up the blanket to cover it up to the neck. He arranged one arm over the dead man's face as though he were sleeping.

Then he had to slide himself under the blood-stained bed clothes that had previously covered Gus Lobe. He made a hole in a sheet, so that he could peer out and watch the other bed. His gun gave him additional courage, clutched ready in his right hand.

He could no longer see the light round the trapdoor. Apparently it had been extinguished below, and the murderers were ready for their work.

A noise seemed to come from the floor in the middle of the room. Capps sat up. He aimed his gun at it. Then it ceased and he lay back under the cover.

It came again. He strained his eyes to pierce the darkness. He saw another trapdoor inching upward.

Capps concentrated on keeping himself from gasping out with terror. His hand gripped the gun till it hurt.

The trapdoor was completely raised. In the opening he saw first the Negro's head. Then as he came up into the attic, the old man appeared behind him. He carried a shotgun and also climbed up to stand beside the Negro, who still lovingly clutched his club.

Both stood stock still for several minutes, trying to make sure their victim slumbered safely.

The word of command came from the white man. "Go get him, Charlie," he said. "Make it sure."

The Negro stepped lightly towards the bed on which Capps was supposedly sleeping. The club was raised high above his head ready to strike.

From his hiding place Capps watched. He wanted to shoot the Negro. He knew he could not miss. But he was so petrified with the terror of the situation he could not move. He could not raise the pistol even to aim it.

The Negro stood poised for a second above the figure in the bed. Then the club came whirling down. Capps shuddered. But Charlie was not yet flushed. Again and again the club rose and flashed down sickeningly as it would have on Capps himself had he not heeded the coin "voice" of Gus Lobe.

A laugh of satisfaction came from the old man. "That's enough, Charlie," he ordered. "Get his wallet now."

Capps stiffened. Now he had to act. Through the gloom he could see the Negro was frightened. He hesitated to touch the body of the man he had killed.

But it was only a momentary delay. In an instant, if the Negro did not obey, the old man himself would go, searching for the wallet. Then the trick the salesman had played would be discovered.

Through the cabin there reverberated a sudden banging and shouting. It came from the front door below. There were men down there, knocking and demanding admittance.

Capps did not know who they were or what they wanted—but they provided a diversion that averted disaster for a time at least. At the sound, the old man whispered for Charlie to follow him. Both left the attic and des-

Continued on page 66



Horseshoe in my hand

*Spade would gamble on anything—a horse, the turn of a card
—or whether or not he would walk up thirteen steps to the noose.*

THE girl with the rust-colored hair and the man who had no hair at all hurried into the West Street police station just as they were dragging O'Farrell in from the detective room. She ran to him and took his handcuffed hands in both of hers.

"It's all right, Spade," she said. "I've arranged bond."

Detective Johnny Frederick shook his head. "Too bad, Reddy, but this isn't bailable . . . The charge is murder."

The bald bondwoman said, "See you some more," and walked out.

Reddy knied the handcuffed man. "I'll get Jerry Crayne," she said. "Don't worry, honey. They'll never make this stick." Spade O'Farrell grinned.

"Don't you worry, baby," he said. He lifted his manacled hands, half clenched the fingers of his right hand, rubbed them into his wrist.

"Just for luck, Rabbit's-foot," he whispered. "Just for luck!"

Prosecutor Thomas Carty paused in his address to the jury. He ran his hand through his thick grey mane, turned and faced the smiling defendant, legs wide apart, jaw set.

His voice was a murmur as he said: "And then, gentlemen, the gambler sinked his left. He struck, depending on his luck, confident that no jury would convict a man for defending his so-called honour. The honour of a professional gambler!"

The prosecutor laughed suddenly. His voice rose, he wheeled from O'Farrell to face the jury.

"It was a cool play, gentlemen, a cold-blooded bluff! A man's broken body lay in the street. A gambler, yes, a hoodlum, an ex-convict, but a human being! That man was awardest! It will be shown that this was no sudden 'affair of honour,' but the culmination of a careful plan."

His voice fell again. It was confidential, persuasive, reasonable.

"It will be proved that Spade O'Farrell had twice before threatened Larry Lansner with death; it will show that the defendant goaded his victim into an accusation of cheating — to give him an excuse to kill him. Yes, the prosecution will show motive, prove premeditation."

He paused, fixed O'Farrell with a stern, avenging look, then swung toward the jury, his voice a whip. "The prosecution is calling this gambler's bluff! The prosecution charges James Francis O'Farrell with murder in the first degree!"

Spade's mocking eyes rested for a moment upon the prosecutor as if applauding this virtuoso performance. Then he heard Jerry Crayne's confident low voice. "This is going to be a walk, Spade. Wait'll I ring in your war record, wait'll I quote that citation for what you'd'd in New Guinea, wait'll I—"

The two men were strolling unhurriedly across the station when the rusty-haired girl appeared.





"If all you're going to do is sleep, you might as well have stayed home!"

Spade shook his head slowly. "We'll skip the hairs and flowers, Jerry."

Jerry Crayne argued imploringly: "But Spade! I'll have the prosecutor himself crying—nobody's gonna cross a guy entitled to wear the D.S.C.—the—"

Spade shook his head again, definitely. "I'll pay them," he said.

He turned to look across at Ruddy, seated just outside the raft; he smiled, and raised his hand in characteristic gesture. She forced an answering smile and repeated the gesture, rubbing her fingers into her rusty hair.

The prosecutor's parade of witnesses came to an end. The prosecutor looking at the jury, announced, "That, gentlemen, is our last. The prosecution rests."

JERRY CRAYNE called the defendant to the stand. Spade looked at Ruddy, smiled, rose. The leap he had crossed the stand was hardly noticeable. In that room only Ruddy and Jerry Crayne knew about the steel brace on the left knee—a souvenir of New Orleans.

Spade was sworn, sat down. Jerry

Crayne asked him to tell the circumstances which led to the altercation with Lanny Lancaster.

"Well," Spade said, "we were playing table stakes, dealer's choice. I was dealer, so I called for draw that round. Lanny was under the gun. He checked, and Clyde O'Bannon hit two blue chips. Everybody stayed. I boosted it a hundred, and Lanny made a five more I just called. Lanny said he guessed his hand was good enough as it was. So I drew three cards to a pair of bullets. It didn't help. Lanny tapped me for my stack—about eight hundred. I called. My aces were good. He didn't have a thing. It made him sore. He said I'd run a pack of readers."

Spade paused. He explained, apologetically, to the jury—"Readers are cards that are marked so the dealer can feel the high cards as he deals 'em out. I don't have to use readers. I'm just naturally lucky. So I hit him on the chin for that crack. He was a little off balance, and fell back toward the open window. He reached for his pocket. They say he didn't have a gun, but that's the way I had to play it then. So I hit him again, and he toppled out of the window,

I felt pretty sick about it. I never did like the guy, but I didn't mean to kill him. Maybe I had told him a couple of times I'd break his neck. But that was just talk, of course. I did break his neck, all right. But it was an accident. If it happened all over again, I guess I'd hit him just the same. Nobody can call Spade O'Farrell a clown."

The judge took his seat on the bench. The jury began to file in. The foreman was smiling.

Jerry Crayne whispered jubilantly: "We're going to lose this case, Spade, without even mentioning the situation!"

O'Farrell, his eyes on the jury, shrugged and shook his head.

"Right to the point's wrong," he murmured, without moving his lips.

"Hundred?" Spade guessed.

"It's a bet," the lawyer whispered.

The bailiff, glaring at the counsel table, rapped sharply for silence. Spade turned and looked at Ruddy. She rubbed her fingers in her hair. Her lips said: "Just for luck?"

O'Farrell hardly heard the mumbo-jumbo of the court. His eyes were on the other eleven men, not the smiling foreman, who rose. He began to speak cheerfully.

"We, the jury, find the defendant, James Francis O'Farrell, guilty."

There was a stir in the courtroom, a loud collective sigh. The foreman passed. The bailiff rapped for order.

"Tough luck, kid," Crayne muttered.

"What do you mean, tough?" demanded Spade O'Farrell, with a little chuckle. "You owe me five hundred!"

THE bailiff rapped again. There was dead silence. The foreman cleared his throat. He repeated:

"We, the jury, find the defendant, James Francis O'Farrell, guilty of the crime of—"

He paused like an actor about to give the "punch line." Spade kept his eyes off Ruddy. He didn't want to see her face. Under his breath he said:

"It's dead even! I beat the mouse!"

But Crayne was no longer in a winking mood. He was staring at the jury foreman. He muttered, "That guy's a born sit-beat—just like me. Come on, Holey, give it!"

The foreman said: "Manlaughter!" He looked as if he'd like to take a bow. Spade laughed.

"What'd I tell you, Jerry?" he said. "I'm all lucky!"

From the Evening Star:

James Francis (Spade) O'Farrell, who'd hit you that black in white and that two and two make seven—if he gets the right kind of odds—won five hundred pounds in General Sessions Court today, but he lost his freedom when a jury before Judge Harry T. Mahaffey found him guilty of manslaughter in connection with the slaying of Lanny Lancaster, another gentleman of chance, in a hotel last month.

The gambler was down his

lawyer, Jerry Crayne, who had him five to eight he'd be acquitted. And if you ask Spade O'Farrell, he copped his bits with prosecutor Thomas Cary, who had to be content with the lesser count when he'd been grandly demanding the death penalty.

Spade will pay off his losing wager to the People with five to ten years in jail, while his lawyer will hold the five hundred pounds for a stake for his client when he gets out.

"And watch me run that money into important dough when I do come out," said the gambler.

He asked Crayne's plan for an appeal from the conviction with the characteristic snarl: "I've lost this round and I'll pay off in full. Besides, I never crowd my luck."

* * *

Detective Johnny Frederick halted as they started through the gate at the midway station. Spade stopped too when the handcliff jerked sharply at his wrist.

"Here comes your girl," said Frederick, with a grin. "Better rub that rabbit's-foot once more. You're gonna need some luck."

RUDDY put her arms about him. For the first time since the arrest, she broke. Spade took her hands awkwardly.

"Hey," he said. "Turn it off."

He kissed the tears away.

"I'll be waiting," she said.

"It may be a long time," said Spade.

"Five will get you twenty you're back in two years," she said, with a catch in her throat.

"It's a sucker bet, but I'll take it," he grinned.

"This train won't wait, even for you," said Frederick.

Spade grinned. He kissed the girl again, gently.

"Look, kid," he said. "If Mr. Right should come along—why, just blow out the light that's burning in the window and grab yourself a chunk of happiness."

For answer she lifted his manacled wrists. She closed the fingers of his right hand. She rubbed them into her rusty hair.

"For luck," she whispered.

There was a queer and unaccustomed lamp in Detective Johnny Frederick's throat as he muttered: "You know, Spade, maybe you are a lucky guy, at that."

THIS girl with the rust-coloured hair listened without a word as the tall young man with the serious grey eyes went on, quietly, but very earnestly.

"I know there's nothing very romantic about me, Ruddy. I've never done anything or been anywhere. I've worked hard ever since I was a kid. I washed dishes to go to university. I never played half-back. In fact, I never played at all—until I met you."

She smiled at him gently. There was a solid, comfortable appeal to him. He wasn't smart, like Spade; he wasn't gay. But he was reasonable, he was dependable. He wanted the things she'd thought the never would want—a steady job, a home, with a pond and a fence around it. He'd always be home to dinner. He wanted children.

"I've wanted over a year to say this," he went on. "I wanted to be sure. I suppose I'm a pretty dull sort of guy. I don't make much money at the bank. I don't think I ever will. But I'll always have a job. Next year it'll be a better job and the next year still a little better. I'd want you to give up the beauty shop, of course. I guess Carey would give you a few hundred for your share. You could have that for your own spending money until I did better. Maybe you'd be bored with the kind of life I can offer you. Maybe you'd think about the old high-rolling days when it was fun or thrills, depending on how the ponies ran. I don't know. You'll have to make up your mind about this. Or maybe you feel it would be delayed to marry somebody else, when he's in jail. All I can say is that I wouldn't think much of a man who'd hold a girl to a promise to wait for him through five to ten years of sentence for murder."

"Misdeed," she said.

"Don't think I'm condemning him."

said Harry Crampton. "He acted according to his code. It's just that it isn't my kind of code. And I don't think that deep down in your heart it's your kind, Ruddy. But you've got to make up your own mind. If you feel that you're bound by your promise—well, I'm not a gambling man, but I hope I can be a good loser."

The girl said: "I'm not bound, Harry. Spade wouldn't have then. Why, the very last thing he said was that if Mr. Right should come along, he wanted me to grab myself a chunk of happiness."

Harry said very quietly: "Then I guess it comes right down to it, my dear. Either I'm Mr. Right—or I'm not. If I am, you'll marry me."

He touched her for the first time. He took her hands and looked into her eyes. They gave him no answer, and his lips, grateful, humble, found hers.

Number X-10307 said without moving his lips: "All right, Spade. Once more. Odd or even?"

Spade said: "Even."

They looked down the long table. A convict began to stir his coffee. Number X-10307 grinned. The convict's number was X-7099. He stirred vigorously. Then another convict suddenly picked up his cap, gulped the sweating liquid. He was number X-4200.

Spade said: "That's thirteen hundred even."



"Smother her shifts even."

"You lucky dog!" said Number X-30307.

Casey held out an envelope to Ruddy and Harry entered the beauty shop.

She said: "It's from Jerry Crayne."

Ruddy took the envelope. Harry's lips quivered. There was a pleading look in his eyes. She kissed him, quickly. Then she opened the envelope. She took out a crisp five-pound note.

She read the enclosed note aloud.

"Dear Ruddy: Spade said to send you this. You win. He'll be paroled Saturday morning. The two years won't be up till Monday. Love and kisses. Jerry."

"Well?" asked the young man with the serious grey eyes.

"I'll go up with Jerry, of course," she said. "I owe him that much."

"And what will you say?" asked Harry Crayne.

"I'll say I've found Mr. Right," she answered.

GRAVELY the Warden said: "You have paid a part of your debt to society. O'Farrell, and you're getting a refund—but only conditionally. You've kept your nose clean here. That's why you are leaving. Keep it clean, and you won't be back."

"Thanks," said Spade, "and try will get you fifty I won't be back."

"You're a pretty smart guy, O'Farrell," said the Warden. "I hope you don't get the idea that you're entirely too smart."

"Oh, I'm not so smart," Spade grinned. "I'm just lucky."

They were waiting for him outside, the lawyer and the girl with the rust-colored hair. With his left arm Spade drew her to him, with his right he shook Jerry Crayne's hand.

"Spade," the girl said, "I want to tell you—"

He stopped her with his lips. The lawyer coughed. He pulled out his wallet. He counted out four hundred and twenty-five. Spade flanned them out. He smiled over them at Ruddy.

He said: "I've got sixteen hundred and forty coming from a little transaction inside. It won't be hard to collect. That gives us a nice little stake, honey. Or we can hop out to the races this afternoon and run it into a basketful. And I do feel lucky. You call the tune."

She said, nervously: "But you're forgetting the terms of parole, Spade. No gambling."

"So I'll pick 'em, and you bet 'em!" he grinned. "I guess a guy can go to the races, just to watch the horses run. That's not gambling!"

Crayne looked at the girl. He knew what was in her mind. She'd told him all about it on the way out. He knew she couldn't shatter that breastful of balloons of joy right now.

He said: "I guess he owes a little celebration, Ruddy."

"This is my lucky day," said Spade.

CRAYNE hated the big car in front of a roadside restaurant. They went in for sandwiches. A man in dungarees was methodically feeding a slot machine. Spade, munching on his sandwich, snatched over beside him. Ruddy tapped at his arm, but he shook his head. The man played his last coin and lost.

Spade dug into his pocket. His hand came out with three coins. He slipped one into the slot. Two cherries came up and three coins jangled out. He played them back. Then he rubbed the next one in Ruddy's hair.

"For luck," he grinned. He placed the coins, pulled the lever. The three bars settled into place. The machine disgorged. They overflowed on to the floor.

"Let's go," said Spade. "I start from here."

It was noon when Crayne dropped them off in front of the beauty shop. Spade stood with his arm around her and watched the lawyer lose himself in traffic.

"Now," he said, "you hop in and tell Casey you're taking the afternoon off. I've got to see a guy in the Hotel Morris about sixteen hundred and forty notes. Be back in twenty minutes."

She said: "I—I had a sort of date with—with Crayne—and her boy friend."

"Bring 'em along," he said. "We'll show 'em how a high-roller rolls."

He kissed her and planged into the crowd. She stared after him. He was, of course, the same old Spade. He'd be the same till the day he died. His way wasn't her way any more; she wanted security and respectability. But he was gay and he was kind and today he was very, very happy. She could make this his day. Harry and Casey would simply have to help her.

She walked into the shop. Harry stood near the door. There was pain in his serious eyes. So he had seen Spade kiss her? She crossed to him and took his hand. She led him into the rear of the shop, to Casey.

"Listen to me, both of you," she said. "I didn't tell him. I couldn't—today. He's entitled to have a little fun. He's feeling lucky—he wants to go. We'll go with him, this one day, and this one night. And when it's over—I'll tell him, I give you my word."

THE man in the red coat led the horses out onto the track. They pranced past the grandstand. Ruddy saw Spade mark his card. He looked up and grinned. He handed her two one-pound notes.

"Lay this with Spurgeon—Bottom Dollar—a place."

He smiled at her surprise. "That's just to keep the franchise," he said. "I'm not betting until the third heat."

The bookie grinned as he accepted the bet from Ruddy.

When the returned Spade had an

affectionate arm around Casey. He winked at Harry Crayne.

"You're a lucky guy, Harry," he said. "You've copped off the second-best gal in the world."

"I think I've copped the best," said Harry, steadily.

"We ought to make this a double wedding," said Spade, enjoining Ruddy with his other arm. "Run the Mainstreet Stakes as an entry!"

Ruddy said quickly: "They're ready to go!"

The horses were away perfectly. Bottom Dollar, rated well off the pace, made a game bid in the stretch and barely missed. He paid eight to five for the place.

Spade gave Casey the winner of the second, but he didn't bet. She won nine pounds. At the paddock call for the third, the group followed him. He smiled as the horses parted past. Back inside he handed Ruddy five hundred pounds.

"Gawping," he said, "on the neutral."

Harry laughed embarrassedly as he handed Ruddy a couple of notes.

"I'll take two pounds' worth of same."

Said Spurgeon, the bookie: "Five hundred on 'Gawping' at twelve to one! That guy must be nuts!"

Harry felt a queer and unaccustomed thrill, as the horses left the post.

He said: "That's the first bet I ever made in my life!"

"Yeah!" said Spade. "Then you're a gone goose now, pal. This is a case-work."

Spade was third as they hit the far turn. He was second by half a length as they headed for home. He was in front by three lengths at the wire.

Harry found himself yelling like a wild man. His hat was a shapeless mass. His collar had burst open. There was a wild gleam in his eyes. "I was twenty-four pounds!" he gasped.

Ruddy grinned with her hands full of notes. She handed Spade sixty-five hundred and Harry twenty-six. His face was wreathed in smiles. He reverently placed the money in his wallet.

"Here's one guy that's going to quit ahead," he boomed. "Crimpey returns from the turf!"

"Stick with me," said Spade. "and Casey'll wear silver fox on her night-gown."

"Casey?" asked Harry. Then he grinned.

"Oh, sure. The second-best gal in the world!"

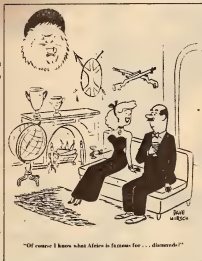
He gave Casey's arm a squeeze. Ruddy thought: He's a good sport. Her mind hung briefly on the word. She smiled, maternally, as she thought of his naive pride in winning twenty-four pounds, and of his boast. All right, he wasn't that kind of sport and thank God for it!

Spade made two-pound bets on the fourth and the fifth. Both won. He hesitated a long time over the sixth race.

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He said: "I think this deal is as good as lost, but you can't win 'em all. Spread 'em on him, and I hope he loves!"

The horse took the place, beaten off by a nose for a fall. Spade heaved a big sigh.

"This is it," he said.

He handed Ruddy his wallet.

"The lot," he said, "on Scarlet Toes."

Spartan counted the bills carefully.

"Eight thousand two hundred and twelve," he said. "And it goes at seven to five. Shall I give you your two-hare right now?"

"Save some for yourself," said Ruddy, as the book the tickets. "You couldn't beat Spade today with a crowbar."

Spade was reading the evening paper as the horses came out on the track. Harry's eyes were glued on that Number 5. His hands were trembling. Here was a man with over eight thousand pounds on that horse, and he was checking over the corner section.

Ruddy said: "If I was a gambling woman, I'd like that red pony on the inside. Spade. He looks as if he's full of run."

Spade shrugged.

"He's a good colt," he admitted. "And maybe he'll forget to stop. But

I don't think so. This one's a sixteenth too far—I hope," he added, with a grin.

It took a long time to get them away. The red colt, finally, was very frugal. The assistant starters were fighting him.

Spade said: "He's leaving his race at the post."

"They're off!" Harry shouted.

His hand gripped the rail until his knuckles were white. Firefly started badly but at the half he was winging. At the three-quarters he was a head in front. At the mile it was a length and a half. Scarlet Toes hadn't got a call.

Ruddy thought: "It had to happen, sooner or later. He'll be down and out. And I've got to tell him!"

The horses thundered toward the wire. She kept her eyes on that red colt, staggering now, but still holding on. A yell that was like a shriek went up from Harry.

"Here comes Scarlet Toes!"

The jock was hand-riding her. Her nose came up level with Firefly. Then the boy lifted her skirts. The photo signal went up. But Ruddy didn't need to wait for the photo. She knew the mare had won.

Harry was slapping Spade on the back.

"You won!" he shouted. "You won, you lucky stiff, you won!"

In the shower Spade O'Farrell sang, off-key, a badly-out-of-date popular song, "This Is My Lucky Day." A large crowd was ahead for himself and Ruddy and Casey and that boy friend of Casey's. Scemed like a nice guy. Well, Casey rated the best.

He stepped into his room, rubbing his shoulders violently with the heavy towel. Detective Johnny Frederick was relaxing on his bed. He said he had his hat on.

"Hallo, Harry," Spade sang out.

Frederick sat up, dropped his legs to the floor.

"Hello, sucker," said the detective.

Spade unwrapped the package from Lavin. Silk shirts, fine French hosiery socks, linen shirts. The silk felt smooth and good against his lean flanks.

Frederick said, quietly: "I hear you win twenty thousand at the track today."

"In that neighbourhood," said Spade.

"You must wants go back up there," said Johnny.

"Oh, that," said Spade, as he began to pull on his socks. "The parlor? No gambling? Who the hell was gambling? Can I help it if my girl takes a little flyer?"

"I kind of like you, Spade," said Frederick. "I'd hate to have to slap you back. I wish you'd watch your step."

"I'll try to keep out of your clutches," Spade smiled.

"You got twenty thousand," said the detective. "That ain't bad. Why the hell don't you get a job, marry Ruddy and give us all the horse-laugh?"

"You know, that horse kind of sensible to me," said Spade. "I've been thinking of doing something like that—oh, say, Monday."

"Look," said Johnny, "you've got out on the town. You've gonna try to balloon the dough into important money. You've gonna back every game in town—and you've gonna end up in that place again. Because somebody's gonna catch you gambling!"

"Gambling?" said Spade. "Why, that's against the law!"

"That's the idea I was tryin' to convey," said Frederick. "Don't be a dope, Spade! You can't get away with it!"

"Why, Johnny, I didn't know you cared!" said Spade.

Frederick took off his hat. He fingered it thoughtfully for a moment. Spade, nearby if suddenly whistling. "This Is My Lucky Day," was advertising the cat of his new cats. The detective put his hat on again. He walked out without another word.

"SEVEN, a good one," droned the man in the tight-fitting dinner jacket.

He stacked notes and laid them against the pile on the line in front of Spade O'Farrell. Spade rattled

Continued on page 39

THE ADVENTURES OF DEVIL DOONE

by R. Carson Gled.



TEST-FLYING HIS NEW AMPHIBIAN,
DEVIL JIM DOONE PUTS THE BIG FLYING-
BOAT NEATLY DOWN ON THE WATERS
OF DARWIN HARBOUR. . . .

"SHE HANDLES LIKE A
DREAM, DESERT-HEAD!"



THIS
EPISODE

"DEVIL AFLOAT"

ILLUSTRATED BY...

ART. AND

"TRY ALL SO WHEN YOU FLY 'EM,
DEVIL SAY—WHO'S THIS JOE DENLEY
MAJOR, HAWKING
WANTS US TO
WEE IN DARWIN,
SON?"

"IMMIGRATION
AND CUSTOMS
(BUCKS), HAWK
SAYS HE'S GOT A JOB
FOR US...WE'LL SOON
KNOW!"



A SHORT TIME LATER, IN AN OFFICE IN
THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. . .

—TAKES IT, DEVIL? BRIEFLY, THIS BAD LOT
WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE "BLACK SNAKE" IS
PRISING IN CAPS TO MOCK THE PEARL-
ISLANDS—AND THE DARWIN
BOYS DON'T LIKE IT.
WE'VE BEEN AFTER
HIM FOR SOME
TIME, NOW.

"NOW I'VE HEARD
OF THIS 'BLACK
SNAKE' CHARACTER,
JOE—"



SO HAVE LOTS OF GUYS, DEV—TO THEIR
LOSS! AS WELL AS ORDERING THE IMMIGRA-
TION LAWS, HE FINETS THE PEARL-ISLANDS
FROM HIS HEADQUARTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF
HAWAII ISLANDS—SEUND HERE AND TELLS
THE PROCEEDS DIRECT TO SINGAPORE—
OTHER THAN THAT AND A FEW KNOWN
MURDERS, HE'S AS TIDY AS THE DRIVEN
SHOW!"



HE'S ROUGH, TOUGH
AND AS MEAN AS
A MAN CAN GET—
—AND WE WANT
HIM STOPPED!"

"IF YOU SEE ME
YAWNING, JOE?
WHAT ABOUT IT,
DESSERT-HEAD?"

—AM I
BORING
YOU, DEV?"



LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE
HUNG A CREW, JOE!
WE'LL DOCTOR YOUR
SNAKE—DO WE
TAKE THE AMPHIB?

NOT LIKELY! THAT SNAKE
HAPPY'S SCARED OUR
MAN CLEAR BACK TO
SINGAPORE! I, ER...
ANTICIPATES YOUR
DISCOMB, DECA, AND—



—I FIRED IT FOR YOU TO
TAKE A PRIZED BOAT, SHE'S
DOWN AT THE PIER NOW.
ARMED, RULED AND GUNPOLED
FOR A MONTH, YOU CAN
TAKE HER WHEN YOU LIKE!"









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IS THAT YOU, NINA?

Continued from page 25

You and the dame—and me! Get moving!”

With Nicky holding the automatic in his pocket, we went down, out a side door to a side street . . . and there was a crown Ford Customline. He made me drive. Yvonne, face white, sat alongside me. Nicky sat in the rear seat, early giving instructions. He revved me, now and then, that the red wasn't far from my skull.

It was about mid-afternoon as we left the city, and headed down the coast road. Twenty miles south, we turned off the main stem, eventually reaching a lonely beach shack. A power boat, on rollers, was drawn up on the beach by a winch-line from the shack.

Nicky made me carry two heavy steel rails, and chains, from the shack to the launch. The winch-line was released, the boat rolled down to the water. Under the threat of the automatic, I worked the engine. Nicky stared.

We chugged through the low breakers. We were about a quarter of a mile off shore when I finally edged the spenser on the launch door close to my hand. I suddenly jabbed the throttle down, hard. The launch surged forward, as a seal lifted us.

"What the hell?" Nicky grunted, grabbing at the tiller, as the boat turned to one side.

I bent down, grabbed the spenser, turned and threw it—hard! The spenser hit Nicky in the temple. He reared as he reeled, firing wildly as he clung to the tiller. Slugs whistled near.

"Quick, Yvonne . . . swim!"

I grabbed her wrist and almost pushed her over the side. She gasped, as we hit the water, "Now . . . I cannot swim!"

We came to the surface. In the distance, swirling wildly and taking its water was the launch . . . and about ten feet away, floundering, was Nicky, still apparently stunned.

I gasped to Yvonne. "Take a deep breath, hold it—try to float!"

I let her go and swam quickly toward Nicky, hoping I'd reach him before the cold water revived his senses. Then my heart lightened as I realized something . . . Nicky couldn't swim, either. I reached out a hand, grabbed his head from behind, held him a moment, and chopped him with a short right. He was sliding as I swam back towards Yvonne.

She sank. I dove, found her, wriggled to the surface. She gulped in air. We floundered under the surface again. As we rose, I turned her round, and told her to keep as still as possible.

Then I swam! That's an understatement. We made the beach. Don't ever ask me how. I remember flopping on the sand, and closing my eyes. I opened them to see Yvonne.



*... you don't have
to gaze into a
crystal ball*

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CAVALCADE

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TRUTH ABOUT MONKEY
GLANDS
MEMORY—YOUR MILLION
POUND ASSET

showed the card game still in progress. Capps went to the other trapdoor and with infinite care raised it noiselessly. He pushed it right open. Not a particle below gave a sign of revealing what he'd done.

Point in hand, Capps stood poised above. Then he scratched an anti-spiriting phony wall and dropped straight through on to the table. The quartet round it saw only the white spectre above them before he lifted the lamp flying.

Capps started firing his gun. Amid screams of fear he saw two chairs go toppling over backwards as their occupants drastically tried to avoid the spectre. A sudden board took him to the floor and he headed for the door. A moment later he was through it and sprinting wildly for the stable. He did not look round, but his haste was not really necessary, so no attempt was made to follow him.

He had his hands out before he got to the stable. A dash out the halter of his mare, Sally, who seemed just eager to leave its bet-matter.

Capps walked on her bare back. She bounded out the open door as though jet propelled. As they went past the caber, the salesman had his gun ready, but he did not need it. Still in his flowing sheet, he would have struck terror into the superstitious inhabitants.

The mare continued her gallop for more than a mile before Capps let her slow down to a trot. Dawn was near, and with it came a clear, fine day. Sunlight made the events of the night seem far away. Capps rode up to a boy he spied on a field for directions.

The sight of him, however, was too much. It set the boy running for his life towards his home, searching for help. Capps reined in and removed the sheet. He folded it for use as a saddle, and rode on until he came up to a farmhouse soon after. He was given directions to Barboorville, which lay about seven miles along the track.

At the Sheriff's office there he told his story. At first the officer was incredulous, but he changed his mind on viewing the bloodstained sheet. A posse was collected immediately to ride out to the log cabin.

Within a week, towards the end of May, 1897, the man and woman, Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Strong, and Charlie Carmichael, the Negro, went on trial for the murder of Gus Lobe. All were found guilty. Carmichael was sentenced to death and was duly hanged. The elderly couple got off with life sentences and died in prison.

Early Capps went back to his run, after surviving an ordeal the horror of which few men have ever met. He had played with death in one of the most hair-raising and spine-chilling murder schemes on record. It did not come off, but it was a long time before Capps again took a short cut at night through the hellbilly country.

THE END

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MURDER OF A DANCER

Continued from page 5



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PAT DWYER

Box 716, G.P.O., SYDNEY.

He closed the door and I immediately turned to the leads. They were all out of town. I shrugged wearily, in no mood to travel even out of the office in this sweltering weather. But it had to be done. Dahl's leads indicated I had a lot of ground to cover in Washington hotels, including the Statler and Franklin Park, a few restaurants, Treble Cafe, Morlok, and several people with whom Harger might be staying.

It wasn't a simple matter of checking at the hotels by phone—because he might have signed registers under an assumed name, especially as he was a well-known figure. I'd have to speak to desk clerks, waiters, bartenders—and any others who might recognize him from a description like surprising how little most of these cases vary, and how much tougher it is to get lost than anyone imagines. A man is a creature of habit. Ask the right questions about him and he almost tracks himself down.

I made a dozen calls. I scribbled my missing persons contacts that I was interested in any information on fresh "walks." They got that information daily from the various hospital morgues. I didn't tell them whom I was after. My client had been explicit about no publicity.

When information was not forthcoming from these sources, I picked a bus and caught a train to Washington, D.C. It wasn't tough to follow up Harger; as a matter of fact, it was too easy, because the strikingly beautiful Charlotte Maye, apparently always on his company, was remembered by everybody.

I pored down a few details. The bookies said Harger wasn't much of a drinker. The hotel clerks were consistent in the comment that Harger and Maye had separate rooms. All that day and night I ran down leads with the same results dead ends. I didn't know if Dahl wanted me to check around Washington, but I took it upon myself to head back to the city.

I returned on the morning of the 23rd. One of my missing persons contacts called me almost at once. A fisherman in a rowboat had fished a made male torso wrapped and tied in a white sheet floating 300 feet off Bronx Point, on Long Island's South Shore. The head, arms and legs had been crudely removed. Pressed for outstanding features or distinctive marks, my contact commented on the exceptional grace and masculinity of the torso. That struck home with me. It sounded the kind of development a dancer might have.

"Any cleaners?" was my next question.

"None—but we've got 30 or 35 more people coming up for identification. Someone came in here this morning who might see this one up

though—" and he mentioned the name of Charlotte Maye! She, in the company of an officer, had reported Solon Harger missing, and had been sent over to try to identify the torso at the morgue of the Queens County Hospital. Justing three later, according to my informant, was a certain Walker Dahl.

That puzzled me. Why had Charlotte Maye reported Harger missing to the authorities when Dahl had insisted that publicity was to be avoided? I shrugged. It meant the end of my case. With the sunrise, nationwide missing-persons machinery in motion, whether the torso was Harger's or not, I was clearly dispensable. I waited for a call from Dahl. It didn't come that day.

I checked my missing persons contact later and was told that Dahl had definitely established that the torso was not that of the missing dancer I was up and pondered that one. Where did Dahl come off to make the positive identification? What he had told me was that he was close to Charlotte Maye and didn't know Harger personally.

There was no word from Dahl the next day, either. I figured he had enough cash to stoll out for my services, despite the fact that the police were on the case . . . So I picked up where I left off. The hospitals yielded nothing. But my missing persons contact did. "Al," he said, "the policewoman handling that Harger fellow stamped it 'closed.'"

That really threw me. It seemed that Harger's exotic brometic partner had received a telegram from him that morning stating he was out of town and well, and was starting a new life for himself.

That was the 23rd. When I got no word from Dahl on the 24th, I called him. I told him of my Washington point, and asked what the score was. He gave, instead — some Chicago leads!

I managed to take them down without giving away my location. It was some kind of wild-goose chase he was leading me on—but why? My instant suspicion was that Charlotte Maye and Dahl were interested in each other, and had combined forces to eliminate Solon Harger, the third side of the triangle. If I was somehow being used, I intended to find it out.

I had the beautiful dancer's address. Her apartment was in the same building as Harger's, on West 44th Street. I wouldn't visit her as a detective, because I'd never find out anything if I did. One of my best ginmacks was posing as a lingerie salesman. I'd buy up a small amount of fine lingerie which I would sell at a ridiculous price. It rarely failed to get results.

The building was a five-story brown-stone with tailor shops on the first two floors. The instant I looked at the door bells my suspicion of some duplicity was confirmed. Harger's name plate showed he had a

room-mate. And the second name was—Dahl.

Before I went up to Charlotte Maye's apartment with my Eugene valve, I dropped into the tailor's. I told them I was in trouble of Harper's from out of town and was looking for him. He didn't seem to be in his apartment. Did they know his whereabouts? One of the tailors suggested I check with his "beautiful" room-mate, as he referred to Dahl. He also advised that I tell my nephew when I saw him that Dahl had brought down a new suit, which Harger recently had had made for himself, and ordered the suit next to fit him. The tailor had refused to fill the order without an O.K. from Harger.

To me that chance bit of information held a serious implication.

Charlotte Maye's apartment was on the fourth floor. I noticed the name Tuberg on her nameplate as well. A sleek, shapely brunette in a neat house dress, answered my ring. This, then, was Harger's dancing partner. She appeared somewhat troubled, but she was friendly and exhibited interest in the luggage I showed her. She and she and her husband were expecting to take a trip and she could use a few items.

I was invited inside and I met her husband, Wilfred Tuberg, a youthful, amiable Army Captain, on far-lough. He helped her choose from my selection. Now I knew who the Army officer was that my contact had mentioned. Several studio photographs of Harger and Maye on the motel gave me an opening to talk about the missing man.

"Isn't that the missing dancer I read about in the paper?" I asked. A Broadway columnist had already proclaimed the disappearance and it was common knowledge. She nodded. "That's what's keeping us from going to visit my husband's folks in Missouri."

"I think we ought to go anyway," her husband said, excluding me from the conversation. "That telegram explains it as far as I'm concerned."

"I can't help feeling that something's wrong, Mr.," she said. "The way he left that morning at 3:00 a.m. . . it was all so strange . . ."

I said I had a son in the army and sympathized with them. I told them to forget everything and make the most of the time they had. They took me into their confidence and before long were giving me an account of that Sunday night, August 19th. The Tubergs were giving a small party. During the evening, Dahl came downstairs and remained a short time, saying that Harger was not feeling well. He returned upstairs to his apartment which was directly overhead, as sheet 1030.

Right after that the Tubergs and their friends heard curious stamping, creaking, popping sounds above them. They dismissed the sounds as the play of rough-housing of Harger and Dahl. But that was not the end of it, for after the party had broken up hours



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Many persons say, "Did you hear him last night?" They should say, "Hear you heard him last night?" Some speak without ceremony or without due regard to others say, "Hello, hello!" and I instead of "hello!" say "hi!" It is something like this which is not just "hello" and "hi" but the simplest words are not properly used. We have a habit of speaking words with an "e" at the end of the word, as "I've" or "we've" and when we are nervous, in order to make them sound more impressive, we use only common words—indeed, the ordinary. These words and their proper use are the most important things in the English vocabulary.

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later, the Tubings heard a persistent hammering and the splashing of water. They called upstairs and Dahl said he was fixing something. Then at 3 o'clock, the sounds of heavy steps were heard descending the stairs. In the morning Walter Dahl informed the Tubings he had seen Harger off at the railroad station.

Even while they talked I had as much of an idea what had happened in that apartment. I kept seeing the torso fished up at Boney Point as the words "hammering and splashing water," repeated themselves with a given meaning.

As soon as I left the Tubings I communicated my information to the authorities but was informed with emphasis that the case was closed. The impression was, I think, that I was merely a publicity-seeking private investigator.

That was on the 25th day of August and I was still retained by Walter Dahl. On the 26th, still making my rounds, getting to people who know Dahl and Harger, another fact of the relationship of these two men came to light. Everyone scoffed at any possible romantic attachment of either Dahl or Harger for Charlotte Maye Tubings. Both men were attractive to women but unresponsive.

There was evidence of jealousy between the two men, which often flared into violent outbursts of temper. It was just such an outbreak, I believed, that had resulted in a brutal murder in the apartment above the Tubings that night of August 19th. It all fitted together so perfectly now.

Then on the 28th I received a call from Dahl. His voice betrayed no tremor or sign of shaken emotions. "I have received a letter from Harger explaining everything," he said, "and I won't require your services any longer." He would settle our account, he assured me. That was all.

"A letter . . ." I murmured to myself. That was too much. I wanted to look at that letter.

I made my way to the brownstones on West 46th Street, and determining that Dahl was out, I let myself into his apartment with a pickkey. I searched high and low, but could find no sign of a letter. I looked around to see if I could unearth any incriminating evidence. There was nothing unusual about the place, except perhaps for the uncommonly outsize beds. But when I entered the bathroom and noticed that a framed, Joppy sort of fresh paint had been slapped on the wall behind the bath tub—that checked it for me.

Again I consulted the authorities, again I took a job in another direction. I remembered my missing person contact had told me the torso found was wrapped in a sheet. Could it possibly have been an outsize shod off an uncommonly large body? A phone call verified it.

On August 29th, the police requested the case. I made myself available to the district attorney and was

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held in reserve as a surprise witness against Walter Dahl, while the mood of circumstantial evidence was drawn lighter and lighter about his neck.

Detectives were on Dahl's trail constantly now, watching his every move. On Friday, October 10, they closed in. He had withdrawn money from his account and was making preparations for sudden flight.

Dahl was taken to District Attorney Gramett's office where he confessed to the serial crime, describing the gory details.

"I came home that night and we quarrelled. There was a struggle. I kicked him in the stomach. He picked up my lipstick and came at me."

"I looked him again, knowing him. Then I hit him with a hammer and dragged him into the bathroom. I was so scared that I swung the hammer, maybe two or three times more. It was soon plain that he was dead. I was more frightened than ever. I put his body into the tub. Then I remembered it."

On October 16th, 1945, Walter Dahl was indicted for murder in the first degree, but seven months later, he was permitted to enter a plea of guilty to first degree manslaughter.

When he finally appeared for sentencing in the Melbourne Court of General Sessions on May 16th, 1945, Walter H. Dahl was a sick and broken young man. Diabetes had afflicted the joints in his lower extremities and he could stand only supported by crutches. Judge George L. Donnellie sentenced him to Sing Sing Penitentiary for a term of from ten to twenty years. It was hard to believe that this thin, slightly, grey-faced invalid was the lithe, handsome, self-assured young man who had stridden into my office that sultry August day. But that's what murder can do to you.

THE END



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